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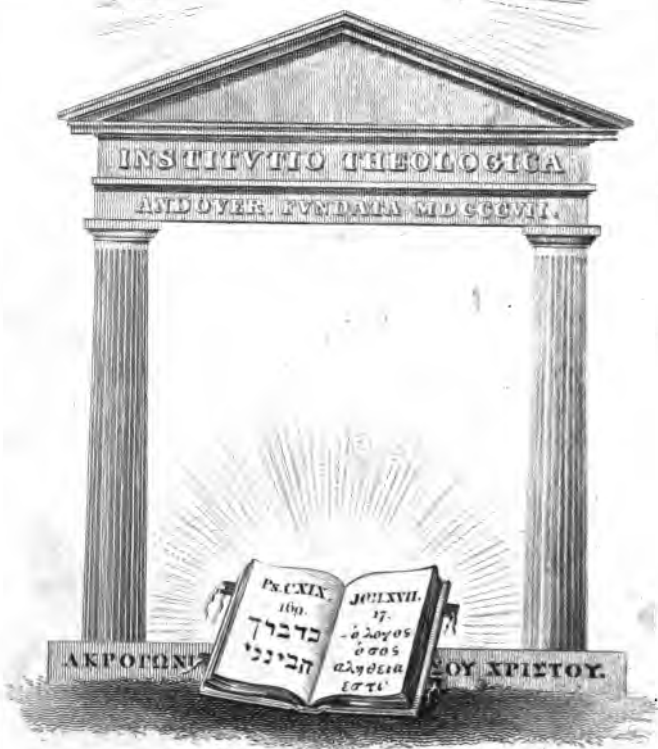
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THE
FULFILLING
OF THE
SCRIPTURE,
IN THREE PARTS.

I. SHEWING THE EXACT ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE WORD OF GOD, IN HIS WORKS OF PROVIDENCE, PERFORMED, AND TO BE PERFORMED.

II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD, CONSIDERED AND CLEARED, IN THE GREAT EVENTS OF HIS WORD.

III. SCRIPTURE TRUTH CONFIRMED, AND CLEARED, BY SOME GREAT APPEARANCES OF GOD FOR HIS CHURCH UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT; FROM HER RISE AND PLANTING AMONG THE NATIONS, EVEN TO THESE TIMES.

By ROBERT FLEMING,
SOMETIME MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT CAMBUSLANG, AND
AFTERWARDS PASTOR OF A CHURCH AT ROTTERDAM.

My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. *Isaiah xli. 10.*

And the Scripture cannot be broken. *John x. 35.*

Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled. *Acts i. xvi.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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P R E F A C E.

IT seems a sad conjunction in this day of a strange security most are fallen into, when such unusual awakening presages of judgment are, a crying voice from the Lord, but yet a deaf ear; how the awe and dread of light, which used to appear on men's conscience though otherwise haters thereof, is now so far gone, as if the present age had found a new way to escape the most clear discoveries of the truth, which was not formerly known; which too sadly presages some strange and astonishing strokes of judgment must speak that, which with greatest contempt hath been rejected from the word; Oh that there might be an awakening to duty yet *before the decree bring forth*, Zeph. ii. 2. For though repentance can never be in vain, where it is in truth, yet it is clear, this may come too late to prevent a temporal stroke; and is there not cause to expect the Lord will take some strange way to plead for making himself known to be God, and enforce the certainty and truth of his word, since men have got so far beyond the reach of an ordinary cure, that the unheard-of wickedness of this time is come to seek its patrociny from Atheism; and the alone relief most seem to have against the tormenting fears of future things, and an eternal state, is by weakening their assent to the truth; but it is well they cannot weaken the truth, which stands unshaken, and brings such an assurance therewith to those who know it, as can fully quiet and support the soul, though they were left alone to walk in this way. Yea, it is clear, though the power and life of godliness lie deep and hid, and the experienced Christian alone hath demonstration of the certainty of supernatural truths, and their verification to the soul, that none else can

know at a distance what they feel and assuredly enjoy; yet are the indicia so obvious, I mean such clear, rational, and convincing evidences of the same, that how men possibly should get these put by, and rejected in this age, is not easy to comprehend; but that a real irritation and torment upon their spirit, from such clearness of evidence now accompanying the truth, is the great influencing cause of so prodigious an Atheism this day within the church, beyond what hath been in times of greater darkness. For clearing this, and to bear some witness to the unspotted *faithfulness* of God, which as the sun in its strength keeps its course whatever clouds intervene, amidst the darkness and confusions of this time, is this following discourse intended.

For the subject, it is great, yea that whereon the whole superstructure of truth and godliness stands; so as it calls for some awful distance in our nearest converse therewith; but such where with an unspeakable delight we may see its ancient standing, the fulness of evidence it brings therewith; these near and sensible approaches this hath to a Christian's soul; that surprising brightness with which it is still found to break up, when at the darkest, and as midnight with the church; the certainty and fixedness of its course amidst all the reelings of the earth; its suitability to answer all that can most disquiet any of the saints, and let them see how clear and straight the way of the Lord is, amidst the greatest confusions of the time, yea, how visibly his *faithfulness* is commensurate to the whole work of providence in the earth.

For the intent and design of this short treatise, the reader can most fitly judge in his perusal; but this, I may say, with some serious aim hath been proposed, to appear in behalf of the glorious *faithfulness* of God in his word, by witnessing thereto in an age, when this was never more directly impugned, and all possible artifice on foot to cast reproach thereon; and for being a help to the Christian's joy; to shew what this day is under his reach, and near even at his hand, for attaining more clear and solid impressions of the truth, and certainty of the Scripture, than most seem to look after; when it is too obvious, what hesitation and dark apprehen-

sions most have about spiritual truths, in not knowing the great reality which is there, and how no science can have such firm and clear demonstrations; in pursuance of this scope some few things peculiarly intended here, I shall premise:

1. To witness how great and marvellous things this day are in our sight, and have a real being before us; that none can deny to be an undoubted product of the Scripture, and there only could have been made known; in which a divine power eminently exerted, and above all possible reach of natural causes, may be as clearly seen, as in the most extraordinary miracles that ever the church knew; and how confirming a seal that is greater than these to the truth is still continued before us.

2. It is not to assert, or give some naked discovery of these great supernatural truths in the word, but to lead into the things themselves, in their real being and existence that this is intended, as truths to which there is a more near approach by seeing, taste, and as it were by some touch, than seems by most to be understood, how near and feeling a converse is to be reached betwixt the intellect and the object; yea, thus what great improvements might be made of sense in its subserviency to our faith, and a more full repose and quiet of the soul for adventuring on the word; so as the way of believing, which to many is so dark and strange a thing, should be in that manner comfortable and clear, with as quieting security as we could have in the way of sense and feeling; the clearing of which in this following essay, in nothing will be found to jumble with that great duty of walking by faith, and to believe against hope and visible appearances of the event, but as a singular help thereto.

3. Its intent is to shew, how by no change or possible casualty, the truth of such great events of the word, and certainty of its verification in these can be called in question; but as to the church in the great providences of the time, so to a Christian in his private case, is it most demonstrable, how every step in experience, and in the way of sense is by line and rule with as sure and infallible a connexion betwixt this

and the written word, as there can be in nature betwixt the cause and the effect; the head spring and the stream.

4. To clear also the way of the Lord, and certainty of his truth in this very dark hour, when his work about the reformed church so remarkably appears to be a work of judgment for considering of which, some astonishing providence of this time did give a serious rise.

5. Here is some aim to hold forth clear and solid grounds from the Scripture, with respect to the sad appearances now of future things, and to anxiously disquieting prefages many have thereof, which (whilst the earth seems to be at rest, and as buried for the most part in a deep sleep) are ready to faint and overwhelm the spirits of some; not considering what great assurances from the Lord are in the word given, for a more comfortable prospect of future events, than it seems we allow ourselves, and how well it is suited to answer such very faddening queries; what will become of the churches? of the truth? of posterity? when the enemy is *sowing tares*; the storm groweth, a dead palsy we are fallen into, yea, whilst every man seems to be *with his hand on his loins, alas for that day is great, it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be delivered out of the same*, Jer. xxx. 7.

6. I shall add no more, but that with some special tendency this following discourse may be seen to witness, how it is no grasping at a shadow to be a Christian, and no such realities as these they find, in a time when the professed principles and work of some is to make void the very being and truth of serious practical religion.

For what reflections I may be obnoxious to, in adventuring yet more on so great a subject, I shall say little; but if any fruit and solid advantage be found in its perusal, I might then hope there should need few words of apology; some essays at duty may have these discouragements and difficulties to wrestle with, that if in these there be not a doing for the Lord, it were a sad part to act. These few things I have here confidence to premise, for which I stand at a higher bar than the judgment of men; 1. That in this following discourse, I have sought truth, and not to follow the chase of airy and

naked notions, as having some pressure on my own spirit, that these could not answer to! It is a great thing to believe the being of God, and that nothing fails of his word; I must say, were these truly believed, it might be strange a Christian's life were not more in a continued wonder, and with some greater transports of joy. 2. I have ground to say, that no fear from these times hath oft pressed me with more anxiety, than of these sad consequences, such shaking things as have of late occurred, with the abounding of offences, were like to have, by a too visible tendency thereof to turn many off all persuasion of the truth; which was one special incitement to some further prosecution of what I had begun on this subject; though I must say with such wrestlings on my own spirit, to trouble the world more by any such appearance, that if something from the Lord very immediately had not been to determine and clear, it was some service he would not reject, I should have needed no apology for such a thing, but laid it aside. I hope the reader may not find cause to quarrel with an unnecessary multiplying of words, or that his time is encroached upon that way, so far as the expressing the matter with some plainness could admit; nor from any coincidence of purposes, with what was held forth in the first Part, though the subject and scope be much one; I confess, in handling of both, the frequent changes of my health, the untroddenness of this path, the weight and concernment of the truths, with some study (if I may say without mistake) to believe what I wrote, and not easily to admit things, or take on trust, without a clear and thoroughly quieting persuasion thereof, was not without some peculiar difficulty, beyond what might have been in greater enlargements on another subject. This favour I crave from the reader, in his perusal either of this or the former Part, to take a serious look of the whole, before he pass his judgment on a part, things there being so connected together in their tendency to answer the scope.

No time did ever more pressingly call for establishment in the truth than this our lot is fallen in, and to be solidly founded on such a ground that can bear up though all other props

should be shaken. The faith and patience of the saints hath had a sore conflict, and the darkeſt part may be yet to go over; but it is well it cannot be ſuch as to out-go that light and comfort which is in the Scripture: *Unleſs thy law had been my delight I had periſhed in my affliction*, Pſal. cxix. 32. Were it known what it is to have theſe ſo near, how eaſy ſhould it be to reaſon with what ſeems moſt peculiarly to influence the heavineſs and trouble of many this day. 1. From the preſſure of affliction and multiplied temptations, which with ſome now may be ſo fore, as the waters are ready to enter into their ſoul, and put them to queſtion their principles; but thus is the Lord's way with his people known, when he brings them into ſtraits, to give them a greater light than before; as *Luther* after ſore wreſtlings ſaid, *ſtatim apparuit mihi nova facies Scripturae*; the afflicted have their peculiar comforts, much beyond others; and know what it is to bear up the heart, that it is ſtronger than itſelf. 2. Such is the tribulation of theſe times as may ſeem more imbittering to ſome, from the different lot they ſee of others; how many *ſtretch themſelves on their couches, that chant to the ſound of the viol, and drink wine in bowls, but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joſeph*, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. Few ſeem to know the heart of the afflicted, or are found to act the Samaritan's part; and how rare are theſe 'who ſearch out the cauſe of the poor, whom 'men regard not;' and oft have no witneſs to their griefs but one, but is indeed one for all, *Thou God ſeeſt me*, Gen. xvi. 13. It is in the Bible the cauſe of the oppreſſed will find patrociny, when no where elſe; nor can that aſſurance fail, *but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy*, John xvi. 30. Every day hath this work, to put ſome part of the Chriſtian's griefs, and the moſt deſirable enjoyments of others by, which can never poſſibly be re-acted, nor return any more again. 3. Are not prejudices at holineſs now ſuch as might put Chriſtians more on their guard for a ſolid founding on the Scripture, yea, when it is ſo clear truth ſuffers not at that rate, nor is the ſhaking of many, in ſuch hazard, from what viſible oppoſition is thereto, as by theſe more ſubtile conveyances of reproach; whiſt a ſerious care to prevent this, or to advance

the repute and credit of that excellent profession of holiness, seems to have but little weight upon us. Truth this day is as a broken and shipwrecked interest in the eyes of many, offences have come in as a flood upon the church, whence a spirit of Atheism hath in a strange manner got up, and been upon the ascendant, but a recovery must be of all that is lost; when that creating-word from the Lord on the dry bones comes to bring them together, and put flesh and sinews thereon. There are three things seem this day to be a difficult part of a Christian's work; though duties which had never a more peculiar season and call thereto, than now.

1. *By a manifestation of the truth, to commend ourselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God, 2 Cor. iv. 2.* So as in the worst of times holiness may appear, with which the greatest lustre and most advantage doth then commend its truth and certainty to others; nor can the time be such as this can want some dread and awe therewith, to draw forth a testimony from its greatest haters, when to enforce it the more, the world may see how well a close and fervent adherence to the truth, with a convincing prudence can evidently meet, so as to shew none are more men than such who are most Christians; yea, how these upon higher inducements and principles than any outward interest, must be swayed in pursuance of their duty.

2. It may be reckoned a very difficult service this day to stand in the gap when a breach is made; to come in the room of an intercessor betwixt a highly provoked God, and a people in whose case so much cause is to dread the near approach of that sentence, Zech. xi. 9. The duty is undeniable, to pursue a national reconciliation as well as personal, though but one were found to adventure thereon, *to lift up a prayer, for the remnant that is left; and put so sad a ruin under the great high Priest's hand; yea, such doth the Lord look after, when judgment is ready to go forth; And I sought for a man that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me, that I should not destroy the land, but I found none, Ezek. xxii. 30.* This seems but little believed, how far he

does subject the interests of a nation to the prayers of his people; Isa. xlv. 1. yea, what upon a *peradventure* hath been reached in the most hopeless essays, John iii. 9. but Oh how sad when these who are most concerned to keep a land from sinking, it cannot bear.

3. It may be too obvious, how difficult a part of a Christian's work this is, to walk aright towards others in a distempered time, when a spirit of jealousy seems to be poured out; so little oneness of heart oft found, where there wants not oneness of principles; and too visible an abounding of these evils the apostle speaks of, as some part of the church's ruin in that time, *envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings*, 1 Tim. vi. 4. *Two* things may be instanced, which this day seem to give a peculiar rise thereto: one is, the little personal freedom both Christians and ministers have amongst themselves, whilst so sad a liberty is oft taken to speak at a distance to the prejudice of others; yea, when it cannot be hid, how many such things that have begot distance, jealousy, and bitterness of spirit, upon more clear and convincing trial are oft found a grappling with their own shadow; thence gets Satan such advantage, and the prayers of the church are obstructed more than is laid to heart. Some sins seem not once to come near, distress our conscience as a transgression of the rule. I confess one of the difficult works of a Christian is here, and needs some especial touch of the great Healer's hand, on the spirits of his people, to make easy, how to walk with that tenderness, prudence, and yet freedom of spirit, in duties we owe to others. But a second I must name, that gives too visible a rise to our ruin this day from ourselves, more than from all our adversaries, the want of a humble spirit, in so remarkably humbling a time; what rare excellencies hath this oft spoiled! and whether in a nation or a man, it is that the holy God will contend with; I am sure, if our sad distempers were followed more to the true rise, here it might be found. But I fear to have transgressed with too long a preface.

THE
FULFILLING
OF THE
SCRIPTURE.

PART II.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD, CONSIDERED AND CLEARED,
IN THE GREAT EVENTS OF HIS WORD: THE ACCOM-
PLISHMENT OF WHICH, IN ITS CONVINCING AND NEAR
APPROACH THIS DAY BEFORE MEN'S EYES, WITH SOME
CLEAR DISCOVERY THEREOF IN THE WORK AND CONDUCT
OF PROVIDENCE ABOUT THE CHURCH, IS SHEWED FORTH,

Great is thy faithfulness, Lam. iii. xxiii.

CHAP. I.

THE Prophet being taught of God, to indite a Lamen-
tation for the church under her captivity, and to incite
this almost crushed people to a duty suiting their present
case, which was not to faint, nor have their hands falling
down on their loins, but that their eye might affect their
heart with some feeling impression of such a stroke; hath a
remarkable pause here, and sweetly draws his breath, in re-
flecting on the way of the Lord, what a mixture there was
of mercy as well as of judgment in so deplorable a state, as is
clear, ver. 21, *This I re-call to mind, therefore have I hope, &c.*
And thus having once got under his sight some appearances

(though small) of light and comfort, in so thick a darkness, he quits not that scent, until he have the faithfulness of God made as convincing to this people; in his compassion and tenderneſs, as in his ſeverity.

Some things are observable here for clearing the text, which in a few words I ſhall touch.

1. The time and condition of the Jewiſh church, when ſo great a witneſs is thus given; it was under the Babylonish captivity, even whiſt the deſtation of their land, the ſad ruins of the city and temple was before them; when viſion did fail the prophets, the ways of Zion mourned, her people fell into the enemy's hand, and there was none to help; to ſhew what may be-laid in their way for ſtrengthening, who are in earneſt to eſſay it; and how a cruſhed and dead hope may have its very firſt quickening in the grave.

2. It is here we ſee a moſt rare contexture betwixt the firſt and latter part of the verſe; and how indiſſoluble a tie there is betwixt truth and mercy, which to divide were no more poſſible, than to have a conception of day-light without the ſun; truth being the fountain-cause that brings mercy forth, and therefore *are they new every morning, becauſe great is his faithfulneſs.*

3. We may ſee the peculiar intent of this Scripture, to hold forth the unſpotted faithfulneſs of God in ſo ſad a time; which is that attribute amongſt his glorious excellencies, he hath choſen in a ſpecial manner for revealing himſelf to men, as eminently expreſſive of his being, veracity, and power; the rectitude and immutability of his nature; a truth, though we cannot comprehend (for the neareſt approaches of reaſon here, will ſtill leave us at an infinite diſtance,) yet are we called to an humble enquiry, for our further joy and eſta-bliſhment in the faith thereof.

4. The making out of this great attribute muſt be underſtood with reſpect to the written word, and theſe expreſs engagements exhibit there to the church, where the holy God by a marvellous condeſcenſion hath ſet bounds to himſelf, with a liberty for all fleſh, to challenge if his truth there

does in any thing fail; And thus it is clear, how his works are done in faithfulness and truth; not only in an exact conformity to that eternal idea thereof in the divine understanding, but to his revealed counsels in the Scripture, which is the adequate sign of his ancient purpose and decrees in all that concern the church, and the conduct of providence within time.

5. The present advantage of so clear a testimony to the truth for that time, is observable to acquit the way of the Lord under these dark and shaking providences; and let men see with what an uninterrupted course his faithfulness doth still shine, whatever clouds interpose between them and it; yea, how great a stability is in the worst of times for the church's interest, and for all that a Christian can adventure on this blessed security, whilst every day gives so sad an account of human props. Now from the text thus cleared, I shall premise some few doctrinal truths.

Doct. 1. They run not that errand in vain, whose work is to commend the way of the Lord in a dark time, for it shall commend itself to them; nor will they want strengthening remarks of his truth and tenderness, who hath a serious observing eye for them. Thus we find the church was taken up in a fainting hour of trial, and what success it had. It is true, a Christian's essays for this end, may sometimes be like that of Elijah's servant, to go once and again, yea, to seven times and see nothing; and the first breaking up of their hope, have so small an appearance as the hand-breadth of that cloud had to him, though at last it made the heavens black therewith, and the return as large as its delay seemed long; but whatever thus from the Lord is for trial, it is sure the faithful improving of a little this way, must still lead into a growing strength, and a serious aim to keep up the credit of the truth both on their own heart and with others, can leave none behind. Oh what rare mercies lie oft hid under some dark and afflicting providences, even whilst they are at our hand, and are not seen, from the forwardness of an imbittered spirit, that will not let its own eyes

see the advantage of such a case; but as if they did well to be angry against God, will quarrel more his crossing their humour, than observe his tenderness for promoting their real good, and cry against him, because he will not undo them.

Doct. 2. They are on a choice scent, for their solid strengthening in the truth, let the times be never so shaking, whose work is to keep sight and follow with their eye the faithfulness of God in the providences of their life; yea, does so follow this in their mercies, as that which is to them the better part of such a mercy, when it brings something confirming with it to the truth, and for their establishment that way. Thus was the church here at work in a sad time, and through the whole Scripture is remarkable; did *Jacob* divide these in his observing, Gen. xxxii. 10. *I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies, and of the faithfulness thou hast shewed to thy servant*; or in his pleading with God, ver. 12. *And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good*. And how concerned was David, to have them still kept together in his view, mercy and truth, as in Psal. xxv. 10. lli. 8. lxxxix. 1, 2. But Oh it seems such in these times have had some other sight and conception of this duty than is now understood; and thus have sought a more near intercourse with the truth and certainty of the Lord's being God, with which in the very notion thereof, our converse this day seems to be rare.

Doct. 3. Whatever essays men have to darken the *faithfulness* of God in his word, yet it is such as must be shewed forth, and every time pay in some tribute thereto; therefore is so remarkable a cry here, to awake men's spirits for observing this, *Great is his faithfulness*. It is his praise and declarative glory in the earth, the ultimate end of his works, that point where all the lines of providence at last do meet, and therefore cannot want an herald, though the stones of the ground should arise to speak it forth: for a greater necessity is here, than for the fire to burn, or the sparks to fly upward, that the glory of the only true God, in the verification of his word be from one generation to another witnessed. So ex-

cellent an use is this, that a Christian should think he lives, and hath such a desirable being, that in his day he may put to his seal, that *God is true*; nor need any fear whatever time or capacity they are in, that it is in earnest they level at such a mark and miss it. O what pleasure is thus found, which the voluptuous man never knew; and how far is it above all he can have, or so much as apprehend in his wallowing in sensuality.

I suppose a Christian at such a strait, that he could but speak four words to the world, and be struck dumb through the rest of his time; and that upon this account he were pained, how to speak them to most advantage, could he ease his soul more, or have a choice beyond this for giving glory to God, when he might say so little then here, *Great is his faithfulness.*

Doct. 4. That it is not a flourishing state of the church only, and her rising, but her ruin also does convincingly shew forth this. From this Scripture may be clear; yea, is the voice of the rod as well as of the word, where both mercy and judgment meet in the same witness; and though the bitterness of sin, and that sad eclipse it causeth betwixt God and the soul, is sad indeed, yet is it such as may be no less for a Christian's confirming in the truth than the joy of his presence. If dark and afflicting times were not, how much of the Bible were as lost, and its use wholly frustrate? we stand amazed at some terrible acts of the Lord in the earth, but consider not whose errand they go, and for what end, that it is to let men see, *when he turns a defenced city into a ruinous heap, his councils of old are faithfulness and truth*, Isa. xxv. 1, 2. which if they will not see in the word, read it they must, though it should be in characters of blood.

Doct. 5. It is a begun cure to the church, and so far a day-break under the darkest trial, as there is a clearing of the way of the Lord, that in faithfulness and truth he hath done it. Thus in so dismal a time, when Judah was a wilderness, and Jerusalem a desolation, and their ruins such, as if destruction needed not to arise the second time; we may see how

this was as the turning of the light side of their trouble towards them; when once they knew where they were, and how all that was gone over their head did confirm his unspotted faithfulness; for thus they may be further persuaded of the Lord's being God, and how he gives his word a being in the most amazing acts of judgment, they see his glory shine forth here, and that great end secured, wherein they are to rejoice whatever miscarrying be of other inferior ends; thus however the storm blow, and though the earth should all be in a combustion, this greatest interest is sure; which is the faithfulness of God, they know it stands unmoveable and no loss or shipwreck there, on which more than all that is within time they have in dependance; yea, here the credit of the truth is cleared, the darkness of the trial is so far gone, and the church brought to the light, to see both the cause and cure of her stroke, and needs not grope to find the door for an out-gate.

Doct. 6. There is a season and advantage duty hath, that gives a peculiar beauty thereto; which the prophet does here notice, and thus is pressed to own the *faithfulness of God*, when the faith of many was ready to be shaken, with the strange providences of that time. They are indeed blessed, who sow beside all waters, and find their work wherever it is laid to their hand; and it is sure, where love gets the command over the heart, those cannot want an advantage for their master's service; nor can they lose such a talent, but by laying its use aside; yet sad experience can also shew how difficult the work of the present day does oft prove to the next, and that the season of duty, and for some service to the truth, may be such a tide, as will not flow twice in one life.

Doct. 7. It is not a truth only, what these words do assert; but there is an infinite *greatness* applicable to it above all created things; the discovery whereof did cause so astonishing a transport here, *Great is his faithfulness*; a truth which none can over-speak, yea where no possible hyperbole can ever be; and as no age of the church hath wanted cause for such a witness, I must say, none stands more debtor to this than the

present time. This is the theme and subject to be followed forth here, which under the sense of peculiar engagements thereto, and some impression of the majesty of God, whose declarative glory in the earth is so much concerned therein, and so visibly impugned this day, by many of the generation, I desire to adventure on, and to offer humbly some further light to what I have elsewhere essayed on so great a subject; and in the first place some clear demonstrative grounds of that infinite greatness, to which no angels nor men may or can lay claim; I shall but in a few words instance.

1. How *great* is it, where such assurances are given to the church, that the Lord must cease to be God, and those visible heavens and earth cease to have a being, before his faithfulness in one jot of the written word fail. This is that ground the Christian's faith hath in the darkest day to cast anchor on, and it is sure, is no bottoming on a dream, when it is such *wherein it is impossible for God to lie*, Heb. vi. 18. *Et cui non potest subesse falsum.* Contingency hath no dominion here, nor man's free will, whose rise and working is within time; but his word is that before which all flesh must keep silent, *my counsel shall stand, saith the Lord, and I will do all my pleasure*; to which all second causes, both in their operation and purpose are indissolubly linked.

2. Is it not *great* whereon such a weight does this day lean, which is no less than that burden of the visible heavens and earth, with their continued order and course, the whole militant church, the everlasting state and blessedness of the elect, and all their interests within time, which are on this great foundation rolled over and sure; yea, it is here the personal weights and burden of every one of the saints, the uprising of the afflicted and bowed down, the credit and support of many, whose alone security for their daily bread is the promise of God; and their venture whose *believing in hope* is oft such, *that it is against hope*, and all visible appearances, which on this alone ground are insured; the least part whereof were enough to sink us, if that were not to bear all up, *Great is his faithfulness.*

3. How infinitely *great* is this, in the import thereof; which (I am sure) if understood, we could not in so ordinary a way look upon the Scripture, when it is no less than an infallible assurance given from heaven to the church, and here upon earth put on record for things of highest concernment; wherein before angels and men it is insured by him who lives for ever and ever.

1. That whilst time is, the ordinances of heaven, shall continue as they are, there shall be summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, and therefore even he who soweth the ground should sow it in hope.

2. That the world shall be no more deluged by rain, for which the written word is our alone security.

3. That as the Lord is God, his church shall be continued in the earth, and a seed to serve him whilst the sun and moon endures.

4. That none of the saints shall be *utterly cast down*, or by any temptation ruined, as to final apostasy, *being kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.* 1 Pet. i. 5.

5. That he on whom help is laid, *shall be satisfied with the travail of his soul; shall see his seed, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand,* Isa. liii. 10. Yea, no nullity or revocation shall forever be of that blessed Indenture he hath made with his church.

6. That he will make them what he hath required them to be; and his own promise shall be the spring of these qualifications annexed thereto.

7. That none can condemn, whom Jesus Christ hath justified, and to his alone righteousness hath fled for their refuge.

8. That they shall be for ever with God and *received into glory, whom he guides by his counsel here.* Thus for all these great interests does his faithfulness stand good; and what yet remains to perfect the whole work of providence in the earth, the Christian's conduct and support in his journey, their safe passage through death, yea the keeping of their dust in the grave, and a raising of the same body at the last day.

4. His faithfulness is *great*, in that continued course it hath had with the church since the beginning of time to this day, and never lost ground, but is still the same, and with the same strength hath shined under all these assaults which hath been for its darkening. It was at the first being of the creation, that so great a light began to dawn *when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.* What a transport must this have been when these blessed triumphant spirits the angels could in one moment see themselves brought out of pure nothing, into that ineffable light of seeing God, with so clear a discovery of his name and attributes. It is true, there is a gradual light and opening up of the truth, and some more signal periods of time, to which a brighter shining forth of the faithfulness of God hath its respect. There was a veil over the times of the Old Testament, and Scripture-truths then much sealed up, nor was the Lord so remarkably known by his name Jehovah, Exod. iii. 8, in giving a being to his promises. But now are come these blessed times of the New Testament, whose work is to open up what then was sealed, and bring forth such long desired truths to a visible performance; though this also hath a more peculiar respect to these last ages in which we are now fallen; and it is sure, were this once finished, and that the written word had done its work, for what concerns the church within time, there should be no more to do, but the glorious faithfulness of God which never yet ceased to shine (though with a gradual assent) had gone its course, and were at the full and perfect day.

5. This also is *great* in the extent and these large bounds, where this day it shines forth, which is not in the visible church only, or where the fame of the gospel is spread, (though there alone it is believed and known) but goeth as far as the whole work and conduct of providence through the earth; for in no corner so remote or dark does this want a witness; it being clear, 1. That as far as the power of a natural conscience is, and where men are constrained to observe a power higher than man, to difference betwixt good and evil,

even there is its taking place displayed. 2. Where the sun doth rise and go down, and the raging sea hath its appointed bounds; for these do witness through the whole earth that God, whose promise and appointment they are, and which no human power could possibly effectuate, is *faithful*, and *true*. 3. This must shine forth, and have the extent of its discovery in as large a bounds as there is men: who can exert reason, and not see that marvellous order and dependence of things which is through the creation: so that though they know not the word, yet is this truth of it in such great letters written out, as all may read, upon the heavens and the earth, *His work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment*, Deut. xxxii. 4. 4. What a visible witness hath this, in the greatest darkness and barbarity of the earth? yea, upon such an account, that so great a part thereof lieth as an out-field, without that pale and inclosure the gospel hath made? for it is sure, here is an obvious seal to the Scripture, as well as the being and flourishing of the church. 5. Which is more marvellous, it is not in the dark places of horror and utter darkness, where this doth eminently shine forth; for it is there those unspeakable torments with the continued cries of the damned in hell do never cease, nor never will, to bear such a witness, God is *faithful* and *true*; no possible Atheism can be there, whose felt experience doth force them to know, that God is what his word declared him to be, in that unspotted attribute of his justice. Yea, if a full history could be writ of this world, what in all times hath occurred both to nations and particular persons, (if this were possible) what else would it be found, but as a great and exact history of the Bible, where the greatest Atheist might see these truths they read, there writ in most visible realities before them, *Et quod mundus nihil aliud est, quam Deus explicatus secundum Scripturam?*

6. What cause hath the church to witness, Great is the faithfulness of God, from its product, I mean those great wonderful events of the Scripture, in which this day it hath a visible performance before us; such events, which all may see a power above nature, and the energy of natural causes

could only bring forth; yea, that these are not at a distance, but so near, as if our eyes be not shut, a seal to the truth, greater than miracles or any extraordinary signs that ever were given to the church, might be found at our hand. This is a subject of great import, to confirm and most solidly fix the fountains in the faith of the word, in so shaking a time, which were it understood, no discovery within time could more help to make our joy full. Which before I touch in some particular instances, where its truth and certainty may be demonstrate, I shall first offer these few things to be previously considered for giving light thereto.

First, It is undeniable, and we are eye witnesses thereto, that such events of the Scripture are, yea before the world brought forth, which can be clearly evinced to fall under no possibility of second causes; and are not some rare contingencies, apt to beget admiration amongst men, by reason of their ignorance, but such that do as evidently witness a divine and supernatural power, exerted therein, for bringing them forth, as there is in raising the dead, dividing the sea, or causing the sun to stand still in its ordinary course.

2. It may be clearly evinced, these are such events, that no human knowledge could have possibly foreseen, or from principles of reason have found the least ground to conjecture their falling out; and are not natural verities, which from any inbred notions thereof in the soul, could have ever had a rise in our thoughts, if by the written word so great a discovery had not come.

3. As a further witness to their truth, and that here can be no possible imposture or deceit we see a most perfect idea and comprehension of all these marvellous events in the Scripture, that are thus brought forth in our view, which as we read them there, so are they certainly found to take place, and the one not more visibly clear than the other.

4. Since the nearest objects do most excite and affect men, if they be of no less weight than these that are transmitted at a distance; this advantage hath the church here, in these great and wonderful events of the Scripture, that it is not

on others credit and testimony they are to admit such things, but may come near and see with their eyes the truth thereof, yea, how it is known as it were by sensible touch and feeling; there is I confess an unanswerable attestation of the truth by extraordinary miracles, which with the first dawning of the gospel were given to the church; we see (tho' such want not, beside the divine authority, most clear demonstrative grounds of their certainty to reason) how little weight these are found to have to affect, or convince the world, looking thereon at so great a distance of time; so hard it is for men to be suitably stirred up with any thing that is not in our present sight.

5. Such are these wonderful events of the Scripture (here in some instances after touched) that all may see they are not a transient glance, which at some rare time only have been found to fall out; but it can be demonstrated, the greatest miracles the church ever knew, are yet in her sight and have been continued under the New Testament, by that marvellous verification of the word unto men; though some of these which have respect to some special periods of time, are now more conspicuous, and evidently brought forth in these last ages of the church. O what a stroke is it on our reason, that the most immediate and visible appearances of God do not affect, or have that deep impression on the mind, if they be not extraordinary and new! Thus in the greatest things of nature, how much is the world taken with a monster, that doth little regard the bringing forth of a perfect man, which is indeed more wonderful; we look with amazement on a meteor, who with small respect can pass by those glorious bodies of the sun, moon, and stars, (I confess, these rare glances of a divine extraordinary power call aloud for men's grave and serious observing, and some other improvement, than by most use to be made thereof.) But it is sure, the church this day wants not miracles, which is not considered, that in no strange and extraordinary path these now are to be sought, but in that high and beaten road of the Scripture, and its accomplishment, and therefore is it, that these unusual appearances of

God which in the church's infancy were suited to awake men to an advertence to the truth, and confirm the same, do this day cease, because the unsealing of the Scripture in the times of the New Testament, was to bring greater things forth before us for confirming the truth, which are to be found by our taking heed to this more sure word of prophecy that countervails all these. But thus he goes by on our right and left hand, yet men perceive not, and do not truly see or understand what they see.

6. Since it is sure, the event of things here in the world is that about which men's minds are most taken up; and we see what pressing desire there is to know the transactions of the time, and what is falling out in the earth though it be nothing of their personal concernments. Oh! how strange is this, that the great events of the Scripture that are of such high import for a more full assurance of the Lord's being God, the certainty of his truth, and of that inconceivable glory in heaven with him for ever; these go by us with almost no enquiry or regard. Here is indeed a matter of astonishment, how men read the Bible, do professedly own it, yet nothing pressed in their spirit to know if such marvellous things as are there, do really fall out in the event, whilst such are of nearest concernment, and offer themselves to every ones trial by experience, so that none need take them on trust.

Having premised these things for giving some light to the present subject, I shall here sum up what in this following discourse is further intended in these four particulars: 1. These clear and undeniable instances we now have before us of such events of the written word, where the immediate appearance of God, and a power above natural causes in bringing them forth is so clearly witnessed, that we may see things no less great and wonderful at this day wait the church to confirm the truth, than any extraordinary miracles that in former times were known. 2. The import of this demonstration, with that marvellous light which thence breaks up would be seriously considered, that lets us see, there are higher degrees of assurance and establishment about the cer-

tainty of the Scripture to be reached, than seems by most Christians to be understood; for which beside the clearest evidences of reason such a demonstration is given to our sense of the truth, and these great advantages laid to our hand for believing, that might make our adventuring thereon as clear and comfortable a way, yea, with that full security to satisfy the soul, as the way of sense and feeling could do. 3. Whence it is that Christian's assurance and solid confirmation about the truth is so little proportioned to the greatness of the seal and attestation thereof that is before us. Its objective evidence so large and marvellous a thing, while that subjective certainty within the soul, which this calls for, is so little understood. 4. How excellent an use and improvement of this subject might be made, I intend here also to touch.

CHAP. II.

FOR the first, It seems a strange inadvertence, how such events of the Scripture are brought forth to the world, and this day visible in our sight, yet in such an ordinary way looked on, yea, as if we were more asleep than waking; when if men quit not the use of reason, they cannot but see these both in the discovery and bringing forth thereof are above human reach; about which that great appeal *Elijah* made, 1 Kings xxi. 22. to an extraordinary answer from the Lord, when the people were halting betwixt two opinions, and he said, *the God that answers by fire let him be God*, may be here made use of, I may say to a greater decision, and witness for the certainty of his word, that men would come and see, if he be not assuredly GOD, and this his undoubted truth and testimony, which hath so marvellous a birth and verification this day in our sight, that all the *Magicians* in the earth could never counterfeit; yea, more fully demonstrative of a divine supernatural power, than if we had so extraordinary a sign, as that which was then given *Elijah* from heaven before all the people.

Sett. 1. First, There is this rare *frame* and *contrivance* of

the Scripture, and what a fulness and perfection it hath, as it is the record it bears to itself. Psal. xix. 7. and cxix. 129. in which its truth so discernible in the event, that if men's eyes be not shut, here may be a continued cause for wondering set before them; such, that amongst the greatest works of God under the sun, and all created excellencies, there is none like this, nor can be until the written word give place to immediate vision. O what a real miracle is the Bible, for such is it in itself, in its whole frame and contexture; that though it had no attestation else by the works of God, it might be an unanswerable seal to its own truth. It is indeed strange, so great a light shines, and surrounds men with its brightness, and yet they are so little affected therewith; that such a demonstration of the glorious GOD, and a work which all may see is above human perfection, helps not more to cure the Atheism of the world; who if they would but come near and consider this great wonder, might clearly see:

1. That here is nothing wanting which the church now in the world hath need of, or could in an extraordinary way seek from heaven; and yet is there nothing redundant or superfluous; the whole race of the saints from the beginning to this day, could not have wished it another thing than it is, though a latitude had been given them, which so answers all times and ages of the church, as if only framed for the present time. No Christian but this takes by the hand, and to all that is in their case is so suited, as if for them alone it were an immediate gift and message from heaven.
2. This doth enlighten the whole work of God, and keeps exactly foot with each foot-step of providence in the earth, which comprehends in its lap and bosom every event, small and great, that in due season is disclosed within time; no deep of Satan such, that it doth not discover, nor is there a work of darkness hid from its light. The church never knew her hazard, but might find it was there seen and foretold; yea, the eternal counsels and decrees of heaven, and what is concluded there, which neither angels nor men could search into, are here set open in our view; and that greatest depth of election thus so far un-

veiled, and brought down before our eyes, that men can be no more sure such shall be saved, who are predestinate to life, were there access to read their names in that secret roll of the decree, than from the Scripture it is sure such are elect, and shall undoubtedly be saved, who have come to Jesus Christ in the acceptation of the offer of the gospel. 3. Let us come near, to look to this great wonder, that with such a light discovers the whole creation, and lets us know what such a sight and these marvellous things therein mean, which else, should be unintelligible, and as a dark mass before us; this that draws by the veil, and shews that rare image of spiritual truth in these things that are obvious to our senses; and how the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead are by things seen shewed forth; for thus is the great fabric of nature disclosed in its original, its continued course, that indissoluble chain of second causes, and how high a rise it hath in their dependencies, until they touch heaven, where all these links are fast tied to his unchangeable purpose; yea, thus it is by the written word, that the heavens and earth as two great volumes are spread forth and made easy for men to read, so as without this blessed conduct, it is clear, no possible communion a Christian could have with himself, with the works of creation, with the daily occurrences of providence, or one Christian with another. 4. Here men may see that marvellous contexture and series of truths, how none stands alone, but so linked with a mutual correspondence to give light one to another, that each hath its peculiar room and use for answering the whole frame, and not one pin there wrong placed, but all every where uniform, and like itself, amidst so great a variety of matter, and distance of times, most wonderfully joined and knit by one corner stone Jesus Christ, who is that blessed point in whom all its lines do meet, and as the soul which enlivens the whole body of the Scripture. And it is sure, on whatsoever part of Scripture a minister preach he does miss the greatest scope of that text, if it lead not into the gospel, and his doctrine thence be not thus pointing with some clear tendency to-

wards Jesus Christ. O what a sight is here, could it be truly understood what is before our eyes! 5. Thus we see, it is framed (which the former of all things could only do) to correspond with the inward man, and exercise an authority over the conscience, and our most retired thoughts as well as our actions, and how this and this alone hath brought to light that marvellous and unknown passage betwixt the soul and an invisible world, to have in one moment so immediate a converse with heaven, and from it, and thus to make its continual resort there; yea, lets us see the way for so near a converse with God, which we know by surest experience to be such as it is there revealed. 6. I must further add, what a peculiar weight and significancy are the words of this great record found to have (I mean the original) by which the Holy Ghost hath chosen to convey the truth unto men, which no language, no human skill can express to the full, or is able to give the sense of that marvellous *καθ' ἑαυτὴν* and life in expression, and of these idiotisms there, but one age must still leave it to another for further enquiry and search.

Sett. 2. That great Scripture-truth we see in the event, and the certainty of its taking place, which could never have entered in men's thoughts, if thus it had not been made known, that there is a spiritual and *new Creation*, such a rare structure and workmanship, wherein the glory of God in his attributes doth more eminently shine forth, than in the being and frame of these visible heavens and earth; here is indeed a great discovery, though these ordinary thoughts must have of it, may bring it in question, that either this is but a romance, and not really believed, or our reason must be in a strange sleep, who know so little the weight and import of such a truth. But question this who will it is sure, such as ever knew the reality of religion, can be of nothing more persuaded than they are here: 1. That such a truth they read in the Bible, and is expressly there shewed forth, which nature never taught the world, but to this day should have been a *terra incognita* without Scripture-light; see Eph. i. 19. ii. 10. Jam. i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23. Nor is it a dark view there

given of such a thing, but a most perfect idea and model of this workmanship to the least pin thereof, which is thus set forth before us. 2. That as it is written, and brought to light, so it is certainly found to be a truth. Here is no world in the moon, or the visions of men's heads, but such a creation do the faints know, and hath been there witnessed, since such a seed was in the earth, upon as clear demonstrative grounds as men can have of this visible world they now are in; That the being and reality of grace and a spiritual life, these felt enjoyments of God, and his working in the soul are truths by experience found, and do exactly answer the pattern thereof which was sent down from heaven, and exhibited to us in the Bible. These know there is a living holiness, which even to others may be as discernible as that there is a living man upon the earth; and a second impression which the law hath on the heart, as we see it we think before us in the Scripture. I know, to such who have their soul sunk in the earth, this may be as a night-dream. But do men debate there is a truth in these discoveries of *America*, when now for some ages, by so many thousands who have been there, and have a continued trade with these parts, it is attested: Yet a greater witness to this truth and its undoubted certainty is here, from the whole race of the faints, since the beginning of time to this day, whose record we know to be true, except we should deny there is a sun when we see it with its own light 3. It is sure, here is an immediate influence from heaven, and its continued necessity to conserve this blessed creation, as discernable as that of the influence of the heavens on the earth; nor can the parched ground more need the falling down of rain, than this is found to have of a new watering to cause it to spring. 4. Thus it is known, there is another air to breathe in, than what is suited to our natural life; and another sun than that in the firmament, to convey both light and heat to the soul; yea, a being brought near, and laid under these warming beams; and indeed such a blessed application, as men can know in the most hot reflex of the summer's sun; and that here also are over

cloudings and dark hours, as discernable as it is sure that the earth hath her night and cloudy times. 5. This is such a creation, where as obvious a contexture and consent there is in all its parts, as we may see in this great fabric of nature, yea, such where no *vacuum* or empty discontinuity can possibly be found.

Sect. 3. We see it verified, and before us in the event, which natural understanding could never know or comprehend, if it were not revealed in the Scripture, That there is a *creating of the fruit of the lips*, Isa. lvii. 19. Such a product and fruit of the gospel by the ministry of men to be found, that is no less wonderful and demonstrative of an immediate divine power, than to create and give things a being by the word out of nothing. Here is indeed an astonishing thing, which if a truth, it is then sure we see with our eyes a seal to the Scripture that is beyond these miracles which in a more extraordinary way have been given to the church. Is it a human work? or could it possibly be the fruit of men's lips, that brings forth such realities and wonderful effects in the earth! Could moral suasion, or a sound of air and words (yea where no previous matter to work on can be alledged) have that effect, which so visibly is above the reach of second causes? Now that this is a truth there is no demonstration in nature more evident; That the fruit of men's lips by the ministry of the gospel, is a creation indeed, I offer these undeniable instances: 1. What a power must it be, that can turn the word preached into a real act, and resolves what is as a transient sound into such an undoubted reality of life and feeling; yea, turns the word sown by the ministry of men, into vital principles within the soul. What a sight were it, to see some of the stones of the ground rise up at the speaking of some words in the visible appearance of men. Yet here certainly is something no less marvellous, were it understood. 2. To turn the Pagan world to be Christian, and therewith a throwing down of their temples, and abandoning that worship and profound veneration, which for so vast a space of time, the nations once had to their gods; yea, this by the

word of the gospel, without might or power; Is it not truly such a thing as to bring a new world forth in our sight, and a creation indeed? It is true, many ages are past since this was; yet is it of such import, a revolution so famous and public through the earth, and of that unanswerable evidence, that this day, as a new and continued wonder, it might be as still present in our sight. And can this possibly be forgot, what the known records of these times, which we have in our hands, continue to tell us; how strange a face some ages ago there was upon the world, and what a change (for which human reason could never find a cause) hath followed; that so long a rooted religion should be forced to disappear and this by an unseen power with the gospel, that did not strive, nor cry out. So as now, for many ages *Jupiter* is no more known, nor hath *Diana* her temple, or *Apollo* his oracles: but these found to be such gods as in *Elijah's* time who could neither help nor plead their own cause, whilst their friends contended for them, nor could they be once awakened to appear for their interests. O what a continued miracle is this, that no distance of time can bring in debate, or alledge a possible deceit or imposture therein! 3. Is it not more than human, and the visible product of an immediate power from heaven, that awe and authority with the preached gospel, which is found on these who hate it, not only to beget a feigned subjection, but in truth and effect some subjeeting of their consciences? for it is seen where no visible motive is, no hazard from without to influence such a thing, how many millions have such a force put on them by a power which themselves do not understand, to fear and regard that name, and thus pay homage to the gospel, in whose soul there is a real and inbred enmity thereto? this is a marvellous thing, what an awe and dread is put on the most of the Christian world, even upon their conscience, that would make them stand with an horror and trembling to abandon Christianity, in whom a real hatred to the truth and power thereof is so discernible. 4. It is an unanswerable evidence, this can be no human work, but an immediate creation of

God, which is in bringing forth the *fruit of the lips* by the ministry of men; that the greatest effects of the gospel in the world, hath in all ages had this known remark therewith, to be more found by the doctrine of the cross, and the plainness and simplicity of the truth, than by the wisdom of words, or the furthest persuasives of human eloquence; to witness, that it is not art, or the excitement of men's words, but there is an evidence and demonstration of the spirit, an enlivening air and sound, that is most discernible from the words of these who are puffed up. And thus it is evident, that the kingdom of God is not in word, but power; and how the truth hath a self-evidencing light therewith, and that native lustre which no human invention could ever reach; a Painter may represent the lively colours of a flower to admiration, but no art can give forth its fragrancy and vital scent.

Sect. 4. How great a discovery of the truth of the Scripture is this, which hath in all times been known by the saints in the event, as certainly as they know they live and breathe in the air, *That it is God who worketh all their works in them*, Isa. xxvi. 12! I confess, one of the depths of religion is here, the world cannot reach, and these who pretend that freedom and command within their soul, which hath no dependance on a supernatural influence and power, will not know; but sure and known it is, that I must say, if the evidence and certainty such have, who are Christian's indeed, could be witnessed to others, and their experience resolved in words as they know it in truth, the world would be then forced to see a debate about this is as strange as theirs who would question, if their be a truth in motion, or if day light be a dream and delusion, or not. The soul is one of the rarest pieces of the whole creation of God; and it is here as on a stage and theatre, the greatest of his works are wrought, yea, such that a Christian cannot but know to be his immediate working; which 1. He finds is so far above his own reach to bring forth, if he be not a great stranger to himself. 2. Such he finds by no moral arguments or the influence of outward means could possibly be effectuate; and how little,

with the greatest abundance of these is oft to be found, of a power or effectual working thereby on the soul? 3. These he can clearly see whose work they are, by bringing them to that test of the written word for their trial. 4. They are such works as are not seen at a distance, but lie so near, that a Christian can retire within himself, and there have so clear and unanswerable evidence of a Godhead and the truth of his word, that I must say, were this great demonstration more pursued, of the Lord's coming near to men in his immediate working on their soul, with a deeper reflection thereon, such a degree of assurance about the truth, might this way be reached, that even by the most of serious Christians seems not to be supposed or sought after; this is a price for wisdom in our hand, that few know how to improve.

Having premised these, I shall here offer in some instances, how great a discovery the saints, thus have of the Lord's being God, and the certainty of his truth, by that they know and see of his immediate work within their soul.

1. How oft he causeth a day-break of light and life, by a marvellous surprise to arise within, when nothing but darkness can be seen without, like a sun-shine at midnight, is a truth not more truly promised to the upright than it is found, Psal. cxii. 4.

2. His causing their peace to abound, when surrounded every where with trouble and distress; for whence could such a thing possibly be, if it were not from heaven, to rejoice in tribulation, and find that which causeth them take pleasure in persecution, in necessities, and reproach for Christ's sake? Joh xvi. 2. 2 Cor. ii. 9. Yet this is known and experienced.

3. The restoring their soul by a present and sensible relief, when it hath been ready to fail, and give over, as under a *Deliquium*; which was *David's* witness, Psal. xxiii. 3. Is it not found that if not immediately from above, no other way it could have come?

4. How there is a sensible empowering of a Christian in the inward man to wrestle and follow hard after God, under

forest pressures from without, so that he knows the call to this in the word is not more discernible than his being caused to approach by a felt influence, and power on the soul, Psal. lxxv. 4. how great a witness is thus to be had of the truth, and that surely the Lord is God?

5. Nothing can be more known than this is to the saints, that surprising influence which is oft on their faith to cause them hope on the word, and have a satisfied resting thereon, without anxiety, which all their former essays could not do; yea this, when no outward appearance hath given the least advantage, but their difficulties on that hand seemed more to increase; must not this be immediately from heaven, and above all natural causes? see Psal. cxix. 49. and Psal. cxlii. 3. what an account is there given.

6. It is sure none of the saints but may know whose work it is, that in one moment can enlarge their soul, and put it a going with an easy and unconstrained motion after their duty, who were before so sensibly clogged and fettered therein; and how marvellous a change *the blowing of such a gale hath caused*; where nothing from any outward cause could be found for it; *ere ever I was aware my soul made me like the chariots of a willing people*, Cant. vi. 12.

7. It is no less discernible how the weight and pressure of their burden is oft remarkably taken off, which was before like to sink them, even when the burden lieth as sore upon them from outward causes as ever, yea, nothing to lighten it that way, but finds there is a *staying the rough wind, in the day of the east wind*, Isa. xxvii. 8. and how in their near approach to him, such a persuasion he can beget in their soul of a delivery which seemed most hopeless from any present appearance, that all anxiety, and disquiet is then gone, and taken off their spirit.

8. Thus is he known to be God on the souls of his people, who can subject the will with its own consent, to follow the dictate of an enlightened understanding, and effectually determine it, which once no moral arguments or reason could do, so that the heart is as it were stolen and caught away, yet

with a constraint, but such as hath a most discernible congruity betwixt that drawing power, and their greatest liberty, Cant. i. 4.

Seet. 5. Here is a wonderful thing, and a most convincing seal to the truth, this day in our fight, if our eyes were but awake to regard it, that the natural man cannot see, or perceive the things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 14. How such a darkness should be, That the most searching spirits, who in the depths and subtilities of nature exceed the ordinary reach of men, yet here are blind, though they know it not, and whilst they exercise their reason, and judgment, about the truths of the gospel, where so great a light doth shine forth, yet are these hid from their eyes, and they verily shut out from the Bible, even while they read it, so as they cannot see that which makes the simple wise. Oh what a thing should this be were it understood! and how clear and demonstrative an evidence is it of the truth, a darkness which doth no less confirm the Scripture of God, than that marvellous light which shines therein to others. It is strange how far men would go to see some extraordinary miracle wrought, or such a place of the earth, in which the light did brightly shine, when at that present time, nothing but darkness were to be seen round about; but is not here something no less marvellous, and undoubtedly sure, which now is before us, if we could come near to see.

1. Though it were not shewed us in the written word, it is sure and undeniable such must be in the dark, let them pretend what they will, and do not really see nor understand, what in the Scripture is most plain, who can on these rocks and precipices so confidently run, which would cause an inexpressible fear and horror, if they had that sight thereof, which others have from the same truths, they seem to converse with.

2. That there is a reality in this strange darkness (though it is a dream to the world) is sure, and known by Christian experience, not only at their first entry into a spiritual state, what a marvellous light then breaks up, which they never un-

derstood before, or had the least conception of; but in their after-walk what a sight and discovery is to be had sometimes of a Scripture-truth, that if they would give all the world for it they cannot have at other times.

3. And is not this such a darkness, whence it is demonstratively clear, there must be a supernatural evidence and discovery of the Scripture, which from the light of reason and nature do not in degree but in kind differ, as truly as the light of the sun is from that of a candle.

4. Thus it is not the revealing of truths to us with the greatest objective perspicuity can enlighten, until once it be *revealed in us*. But though men have a natural faculty of understanding, and no want of light in the object, and *medium*, yet doth it shine in on such a darkness that comprehends it not, nor can receive and discern spiritual things spiritually.

5. Here needs not only a faculty and habitual illumination, but a present and actual irradiation of the mind therewith, and immediate disposing of the soul to go forth and receive the truth, as it is represented in its true lustre and beauty.

6. Thus we may clearly see there is such a thing as real evidence, and perception of divine truth, and a seeing it with our eyes that others only see in a map; with which there is also a transforming the soul into the very things there contained, and a changing it into the spirituality of the word, which as it is there written forth unto us, we know, and are sure its record is true; and so is it found.

Seet. 6. It is an undoubted event of the Scripture where men may see a witness to the truth, no less convincing, than of the most extraordinary miracles, that a spiritual seed should be kept up in the earth, which doth not fail or wear out, under all essays to ruin the same: But such an excellent species of Christians in its kind as visibly transmitted through all ages by a continued succession as that of mankind. It is sure this was promised to the church, Isa. liii. 10. Psal. lxxxix. 4, 29. and to this present time is it not seen how marvellously it

hath taken place, yea, what an extraordinary appearance of God is there if these were rightly understood? 1. That human race can boast of no longer continuance in the earth, than this blessed seed can do; for with *Adam's* fall did Christianity first break up that to this day lives, yea, without interruption hath been perpetuated, not in a shadow but in truth and reality; and since that time did the sun never shine in so dismal a day, when it could be said, there were men in the earth, but no Christians, or that the church did die without an heir and offspring. 2. How could this possibly be without an immediate power from heaven, where a continued war hath been on foot these five thousand years and more to wear such a seed out, whilst we see what length of time can do in the world; and that a war without cessation, were it but for one age, could not fail in an ordinary way to depopulate, and wear out the most flourishing countries. 3. Such a war and enmity is this which thus hath been kept up, that as it is not against the godly so much as at that divine image they bear, and not Christians, but the truth of Christianity. 4. Which makes this wonder the greater, we see the party stated in the quarrel against such a seed, is not spiritual wickedness only, or the united concurrence of men, but the very nature of man now depraved, and not an enmity, that is transient or taken up, but doth as naturally descend from one race to another, with in-bred principles, as it is for men to eat, or sleep; so that it may be said human race doth not more naturally move to the preserving its own kind, than to destroy this. 5. How far is this above nature, or the possibility of second causes, when it is so clear, not one of that continued race of the saints, but must have a new life and being from heaven, else not at all; hath no human progenitors, but is the immediate offspring of God, and no womb to bring forth such a birth, but his eternal counsel and decree. One Christian cannot beget another, but it is as great and marvellous a work the bringing forth of the meanest of the saints to have such a new state and being as to make of a piece of red clay a living person. 6. Thus is there

not a visible discovery of the being of God, and certainty of the word, when it is so evident, the continued flux of time, and its changes cannot abate the power and efficacy of divine truth; but with each following age is so convincingly shewed forth, as can witness the gospel does not spend its strength through length of time, but is still, wherever it comes, as a new gift to the world, which hath the fulness of a blessing therewith, even when from other places, it wants not some fatal periods and judicial departure. 7. How great a wonder is here, if we could consider what dismal times have gone so oft over the church, and that impetuous torrent of error and Atheism which hath threatened no less than at once to swallow up all serious religion amongst men; so that the continuing of such an interest this day in the earth, and that Christianity still lives, yea, not in a shadow, but in truth, is truly no less marvellous than the preserving mankind in the ark when all flesh perished, which by an immediate power from heaven was so visibly then secured; and such that we may fear a self-oblivion, and wearing out of human race will sooner take place, than the failing of this excellent *species*.

Seet. 7. It is sure, we see in the event, what the Scripture only could reveal, and all may know to be no natural verity, *That such an union there is in one spiritual nature, and an oneness in kind among the saints, as we know there is a certainty of the being of mankind, and that agreement which in the same nature men have with other; a truth clearly held forth to us, 1 Cor. xii. 11. Eph. iv. 3. 2 Pet. i. 14. and its taking place so great a witness and demonstration of the word, that I must say, were this understood might be more convincing, than if every day were to bring forth some extraordinary miracles before us. But for further clearing, let us consider these two, 1. How it is sure, there is a reality in this, and that it may be as evidently seen as we read it in the Bible. 2. Of what great import this is, for a more full persuasion upon our soul of the truth.*

As to the first, They must shut their eyes (I mean such as know any thing of the power of religion) if they know not

these undeniable evidences of its certainty: 1. That there is one spiritual taste and favour of the things of God, which every where and in all times is known by the saints, though it be not in the same vigour at every time, but from the prevalence of the flesh hath oft a sensible abatement and wearing out; yet it is a truth, by experience so witnessed, that to such who are Christians indeed, and partakers of a new nature, this may be called *proprium quarto modo*. 2. When in any vigour that nature exerts itself, is not such a sympathy also found with it, that all may see no outward interests or human ties have had weight to influence the same; but where grace doth remarkably shine in one, it will help to excite and draw it forth in another, with as real a sympathy as can be found on the nearest ties and union in nature. 3. Is there not a particular suiting of the same means every where to such a nature, as praying, meditation, hearing of the word, &c. so as no change of climate, and no place in the earth so remote, where there is a real Christian, but these do as naturally answer thereto, as our daily bread can do to this body? yea, here also are the same opposites (which to this blessed nature are destructive) no less discernible. 4. And are not the same effects and characteristical operations of such a nature through all ages known among the saints? that as it is easy to discern a man by signs and marks peculiar to his kind from a beast, it is clear, there are also breathings after God, and soul-converse with him, that are as inseparably annexed to a real Christian; yea, but one center here where all the stirrings and beating of this spiritual life do as natively tend as the sparks fly upward. 5. It is clear, whatever difference is in the way and manner of the conveyance of grace to a Christian's soul yet there is but one spring and original of such a new nature; and how this is no moral suasion or any external cause, but is found to be an immediate power from heaven, by the revealed gospel, which in all of that kind doth beget the same image and resemblance of the second *Adam*, as truly as that of the first is to be found in his offspring. 6. Here also is a marvellous oneness in ex-

perience of the truth, to which none of the saints thro' the earth can be a stranger; how quickening, strengthening, and refreshing influences are certainly let forth by the word in their serious following duty.

Now as these are demonstratively clear, let us consider of how great weight and import such a truth is, if our thoughts could be more stayed thereon: 1. To witness the reality of godliness, and that the being of a Christian is no more a shadow, than the being of a living man. 2. That this can be no transient disposition, which the times, the temperament of the body, or outward causes might influence; but the reality of a new creature, which riseth further above the nature of man, than it in its highest elevation is above the nature of beasts. 3. Thus we may see, whatever differences are amongst the truly godly, to which their corruption, darkness of mind, and contrariety of natural dispositions is oft found to give a sad rise, yet these can no way reach serious godliness a blow; it being clear such a new nature is, where they all meet with a marvellous oneness and correspond in the specific properties of a Christian. 4. Thus they can know and discern their own kind; are mutually disclosed to other, by so near an intercourse of their souls, that if such a surprise were, for one Christian to find another in some remote part of the world, to whom the Lord in some extraordinary way had revealed himself, and had never known what converse with any such was; O what a natural warming one to another, and feeling intercourse should there be found upon this mutual discovery, even as the meeting of two men in a land inhabited only by the beasts would cause to see their own kind.

Seet. 8. How wonderful an event of the Scripture, which yet in all times is so certainly known, are these contrary effects the gospel hath on men, when to some it is a *savour of death*, that is a *savour of life* unto others, 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15. Acts xxviii. 24. for it is sure no natural cause, nor the influence of outward instruments can in this strange thing be alledged, that men exercising reason,

who have the same in-bred fears and hopes of things eternal, and by nature alike passions with others, yea, have souls in the same capacity to be wrought on by moral inducements, should by the very same means be so differently influenced to such contrary effects, that whereat one stumbles, others are saved and strengthened; one made further dead and become as a stone, by that means which begets tenderness and weeping in others; yea, one made to tremble, and his joints to shake at the word, while they who are below them in a natural courage are not at all moved, but wonders what should affright them by such a sound; Thus also is it, that some are made to hear a voice, beyond words, & *sine strepitu syllabarum*, which is surely known upon his soul to be his beloved's voice, while these who sit by can discern no such thing. O what is this? which if it were known aright, I must say is as visible and immediate an appearance of God, as the working of any miracle that ever was, when here men may convincingly see, 1. How it is not of him that willet or runneth, but there is a divine breath and air that is from heaven immediately, while at the same time it goes by others unperceived. 2. That here none are masters of their own motion, nor can any previous disposition from nature be alledged to give the word of the gospel an advantage upon some more than others; and it is sure no human reason can find a cause for it from without, why such a mean at the very same time should beget love in some and hatred in others, that when to the world the opening up of divine truth is foolishness, others should be then struck with amazement at so great a discovery of the wisdom of GOD there. 3. Is it not seen also, how surprising and unexpected this oft is found to be, that the more rude and stubborn in their nature are so remarkably oft influenced by the word, while on these who are more polished and refined, there is no such stirring. 4. And may it not be easy to see the truth of an innate quality; when some feed and suck honey from the same mean out of which others draw forth poison; and though no persuasions of men can take off that in-bred aversion to spiritual things, or

change such an impoisoned nature, yet is there a divine power found to do this.

Sect. 9. It is a great event of the Scripture *where we may see the truth near, and a visible demonstration of GOD before our eyes in these spiritual gifts given under the New Testament to the church, and for her use;* which as it is expressly held forth to us, Psal. lxxviii. 18: 1 Cor. xii. 14. so is its taking place clear and undeniable even before the world this day, with so immediate a witness from heaven to the truth and ordinances of the gospel, as might force a conviction on the greatest Atheists of the being of God, and certainty of his word. These are so manifest, 1. How such spiritual gifts are not simply acquired, but they are given; which by no skill or means could be attained, if there were not an immediate convey from above, tho' this doth not justify with that commanded use of means for their further improvement. 2. That these are such as men may see have no dependence or necessary connexion with gifts merely natural; but the most excellent endowments of nature, if alone, are found to be a poor shadow to serve the church, and that they are not suited for such an end, though of singular use in their own place. 3. These are gifts that we see do not cease or wear out, where there is a divine mission, and wherever the church is a building; but when once there is a judicial time, upon some particular church, it may be then easy to discern how both gifts and grace are a going, and a gradual departure both of light and heat. 4. And are they not such with which the world is forced to see a marvellous energy and power for their enlivening, yea something of a spiritual air and breath, and another savour and evidence, to witness these gifts are not only given, but the use and exercise thereof must have an immediate intercourse with heaven, and that surely there is something beyond words or the reach of all human invention in bringing forth the truth, even a supernatural influence, that the most eminently spiritual minister hath not to dispose of at his pleasure; but I must say, the withdrawing of this sometimes may be as strengthening a remark, and

of no less use to edify the church, than the most discernible enlargements at other times. 5. As a more visible accession of these gifts now to the church in the times of the New Testament, is clear; it may be seen also, how a divine incitement is sometimes eminently shewed forth for their improvement and exercise; yea how these are then suited for the use and service of such a time, that it's sure, no remarkable exigence of the church did need a spiritual gift, but it was found and some called forth, the hand of the Lord being strong upon them for such an end. It is indeed strange among other great evidences of the truth, that this should not be more convincing, and how most pass it with such ordinary thoughts, that 1. Is so clear and demonstrative an evidence, that the church's head does assuredly live, whom though we see not, yet cannot but see a real and effectual communication he hath with his body upon earth, as we are sure there is a sun that shines in the firmament, when there is so sensible a diffusion of light, and heat from it. 2. Thus is there a visible witness from heaven to that marvellous erection of the church here, with its peculiar offices and service, as it is a politic body, and that the authority and extract of a standing ministry under the gospel is not only from above, but thence also are its continued furniture and endowments, by a very immediate intercourse. 3. Thus we may have a great discovery of the Lord's being God. I have oft thought, a serious and faithful minister of Christ, who knows in following his work, what near converse with his master, and a close immediate dependence on him is in the exercise of these gifts; hath a peculiar advantage, for some rare and singular confirmations of the truth upon his soul, which are much hid from others; and though these who look on at a distance, cannot know such immediate approaches of the Lord, and marvellous impressions as these left on their soul, when brought near to him, or what may be betwixt a serious humble minister of Jesus Christ and his master: yet is there not some glance of such a thing, and a wass as it were of the glorious God doth go by to the discerning of others, as will force this convicti-

on; here must be something more than human; and that a near and real intercourse betwixt heaven and men upon earth is no empty show.

SECT. 10. Is it not an undeniable event of the Scripture, when the immediate appearance of God, and of a power above nature can only be seen to bring it forth; *these more solemn times, and high spring-tides of the power and efficacy of the word, which are found to accompany the preached gospel,* as the breaking in of a flood, that hath a force therewith which nothing then can resist, we know such a thing is clear from the Scripture, that so great and effectual a door is sometimes opened to the church, 2 Cor. i. 12, 19. 1 Thes. i. 5. And it is sure this is known and witnessed to the world, not only with the first times of the gospel, but in these last ages; so as it may be seen, the sun doth not more certainly return in the spring and summer to the earth, than that such great revolutions have their time also of falling in with the church, such that all may see, 1. Must be an immediate divine power, that can shut the church's womb, and open it, yea, bring forth such a wonder before our eyes, as is Isa. lxvi. 7, 8. *that a nation should be born at once, and for the earth to bring forth in one day.* 2. Such times as clearly shew this is the very finger of God, by that swift dispatch the work of the gospel then hath when a few days or years are seen to bring in more to the church, than sometimes hath been the product of an age; what stupendious, and full draughts are in this day of the power of the gospel, yea, how instruments are then visibly acted forth above their ordinary reach. 3. Whose work this is all may know, which is so clear to have no dependence on men, their painfulness, or that advantage of the most excellent natural endowments, but such a marvellous increase is thus found to the church, when it is so discernible at other times, how the most choice and eminent instruments are oft put to cast out the net with sore toil and labour, and catch nothing, the tide being once spent and gone, and it is clear from no appearances of nature or reason could this be inferred, to shew it is above the reach of all the diviners in the

world where the stars and their conjunction can have no influence. 4. Beside the real effects then of the gospel may it not be easy to see an unusual brightness and heat go forth with such times, these glances of a divine power and majesty with the ordinances, as causeth amazement, and how then the truth gets such acceptance, that ministers will be in more hazard from the over-stretching of their hearers' love and respect, than from contempt. 5. To witness here is a work visibly above nature, and the power of second causes, is not the opening of such an effectual door, and greatest opposition from men, most usually found to meet; and how such a marvellous income by the gospel, when least of outward incitements are to be a bait. But a time of many falling off, and stumbling at the trouble and reproach which attend the truth, is oft seen to be the time of bringing others forward, yea, with that strong affection and desire, which nothing but the sight of an invisible God, and an immediate power on the soul could do; this is no romance or fiction, but is a seal, and witness from heaven to the truth, such as the world cannot deny, that it must be his work, and his alone, who is able to subdue all *things to himself, when he thus doth rend the heavens and come down*, to make the mountains flow down at his presence.

Sect. 11. Could we see or regard, what is before us, here is a visible discovery of God, and of the certainty of his truth in his making out that promise; Mat. xii. 12. and xxv. 29. *that unto every one who hath it shall be given*; how a remuneration and increase doth indeed follow the Christian's work, and a vigorous activity to improve his little as is there written forth, yea, such that may be clearly seen, is above all that men's endeavour and diligence in an ordinary way could have promised, but must be immediately from heaven, and as the undoubted effect of the promise. Now some few convincing remarks of this truth, which hath been clearly witnessed thro' all times of the church, I shall here offer. 1. How surprising an issue most hopeless essays at duty with forest wrestlings oft have had to the Christian's advantage, yea, even to

admiration, when they cannot but see, how great difficulties were made the way to lead into their greatest mercies, and that *better is the end of a thing than the beginning*. 2. That marvellous out-come the improvement of a little strength for the church and service of their generation is oft found to have, which though it doth not appear for many days, yet such is it seen to be in the close, that in no ordinary way, or from visible appearances could have been expected. 3. How the seed was never lost, which was sown to the spirit, but in due time hath returned bringing the sheaves with it, and that these do not lose their work, but is found still to abide with an inexpressible comfort and joy thence, where there is a doing for God, and a single intending him in it. 4. That to *abound in the work of the Lord*, was never in vain, but in all times hath such an increase as makes the difference betwixt them in the reaping, and those who sowed sparingly most discernible. 5. That no lot or trial of a Christian was ever so sad, but such an improvement is to be made thereof, to make it a help to their joy, and let them see no providence can come in their way, but brings their mercy and up-making with it, if the work and duty whereat it points lie not behind. 6. Thus is it found also, how the unseen work of the saints in secret prayer, and doing for the Lord without the witness of men, wants not an open reward, and that a hid growth to the root, and under the ground shall be so far seen, that their profiting may appear to all men. 7. There is a giving which visibly tends to enrich the giver; *and such liberal devices, by which men are found to stand* with a greater income even to the discerning of the world, than all the excessive care and griping of others hath reaped. 8. Is it not clearly seen, how the drawing forth of the soul to feed the church, by such as are called thereto, is the way to make themselves fat; and in watering others, these also are watered. 9. How such as have chosen affliction rather than sin, in that day have found it given them to suffer with so present an income of strength, as hath made it not to their own astonishment only, but of others also, easy and sweet; the appearance whereof at a

distance was ready to faint them; yea, thus it may be truly said, that something in the faith of the martyrs for the truth, hath been oft no less wonderful than in the faith of miracles. 10. It is known, how strengthening remarks and confirmations from the Lord of his truth, waits such that seek them, and a serious reaching at lesser things for this end hath greater added; and that mercies then want not something confirming to their faith therewith, where it is looked after as the better part of their mercy. But to what a volume should known instances of this truth amount; these few things are here only touched, to witness how great a discovery of God, and of his immediate appearance in bringing forth so marvellous a promise is before our eyes, that we may see no connection in nature is more sure and indissoluble, than that which is betwixt the Christian's work and his increase, and amidst these strange uncertainties and disappointments which are this day, how this doth not fail, that the fruit of righteousness is still peace, and he who soweth may sow in hope; yea, such a seen blessing is there on the lowest size and measure of the labouring Christian, according to the promise, as to make their little grow, and bring up the last to be first.

Sect. 12. What the Scripture only could shew, is it not a truth may be convincingly seen in the event, that even here there is *an immediate falling into the hand of the living God*, Heb. x. 31. And such strokes shewed forth on men, which are evident to be above man's strength to inflict, or his capacity to comprehend, if they were not foretold in the word. It is sure, such a seal the truth hath this day, and that these acts of divine judgment are seen to occur; for which no human knowledge by second causes could find either the cause or the cure, but doth with the very first view present the awful appearance of God, and constrains the conscience to acknowledge his immediate hand, and how these can be no casual adventure, but are a visible out-making of the Scripture. Some particular instances I shall here offer, which the world cannot bring under debate, they are so known and clear a witness to this truth.

1. As there is a great diversity of influence and operation the Lord hath on the spirits of men; this may be a marvellous evidence thereof; A *stroke of infatuation* from his hand on men's counsel and judgment, where no visible cause or previous defect of this could be alledged, but is such that all may see is immediately from the Lord in verifying of this truth. Thus how strange a faint and amazement at ordinary difficulties, a fatal precipitance in their motion without regard to circumstances, the season and opportunity of things is then witnessed, so as in the noon day they cannot understand their way, but made to grope as in the darkest night. I am sure the world can be no stranger to such a sight, nor to these remarks of an immediate divine hand therein, if they would but open their eyes. 1. That here cannot be some strange accident in nature, when it is so clear an out-making of the Scripture, and the very same wonder repeated which Isa. speaks of chap. xxiv. 14. when *the wisdom of the wise should fail, and the counsel of the prudent be hid.* 2. Is such a stroke, where a remarkable taking away that staff on which they seemed most to lean may be then seen, that no flesh should glory in his presence. 3. A stroke that all must confess is above the influence or conjunction of the stars, and no product of natural causes, when not a person only, but a people this is seen to reach and not the vile but the honourable and ancient: to shew it is from the Lord of hosts, *that the Princes of Zoan are fools, and her wise counsellors brutish,* saith Isaiah chap. xxii. And there also is the reason given, why such can neither see nor prevent what is so evidently before them, *because he hath purposed it, and it must come to pass.* 4. This remark also may be clear, of such a stroke, how convincingly it falls in with the time of a people or nation's judgment, and when some great change is drawing nigh. 5. And must not the world see a power here above them, who thus by an invisible hand can give a stroke which none is able to cure, and make a people work their own ruin more than all their adversaries; to shew, that judgment hath many arrows in its quiver, and no counsel or wisdom can be against the Lord.

2. Thus there is an immediate *falling into the hands of the living GOD* may be witnessed, when the *scourge slays suddenly, and in a moment makes dispatch*, Job ix. such as an extraordinary plague and contagion, that brings quick desolation therewith; some amazing fires, which as a lightening turns a city into a ruinous heap; such also are these immediate strokes of a divine hand on particular persons that admit no parley, but are done before ere they be once apprehended; these are indeed prodigies of judgment, though from no age they are hid, which without a brutish stupidity may be clearly seen to be no common or casual occurrences, but a supernatural causality is there, and the immediate appearance of that God, in whose hand, as an adversary, it is a terrible thing to fall, whose power can reach a city or nation, as well as a particular person.

3. To witness this truth, There is nothing more obvious than an immediate delivery of some unto Satan and under his power for judgment, yea, how visible so strange and amazing a stroke is to be from the Lord, when such are then seen, 1. To blaspheme and rage against him, when his hand is upon them, Rev. xvi. 11. 2. That a man's eyes *should see his own destruction*, when yet he will not cease to oppose himself to such a divine power, even whilst he finds it pursuing him, Isa. xxvi. 11. 3. This may be clearly known in that immediate power of the Devil over some to enforce their own assassination; for it is sure, such astonishing instances there are, where no *delirium* or want of reason could be alleged, and something more than a violent inticement within made here obvious, like an immediate delivering of such up to Satan as an executioner; and where not only a violent hurrying and incitement thereto is then discernible, but so much may be seen from the strange way it is brought about as shews an actual concurrence of the Devil, and his hand is visible at such a work. This is indeed one of the strange depths of the judgment of God, where men may see a malefactor is not more evidently delivered over to the stroke of justice, and put in the executioner's hand, than some thus are

given over to Satan to act such a part upon them. *Ahithophel* and *Judas* whose judgment was immediately from heaven, wanted not a burrier from hell to execute that sentence; I know the choicest of the saints may be thus assaulted, for whom preventing grace hath oft marvellously appeared; yea, that some have been actually carried the length of such an horrid self-assassination under a natural distemper, of whom otherwise we should be very tender to judge. This only in such stupendous instances is to shew how near and visible an approach of God oft is in some strokes of his hand, and that *there is a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity*, Job xxxi. 3.

4. Thus is there an immediate appearance of God, and his hand convincingly witnessed in the *delivering up even some of the saints unto Satan for trial*; which not only may be seen in their outward state by a strange unusual appointment of imbittering things, that then are at once found to meet to make a cross sharp, like a re-acting of *Job's* case in some degree, and of that method the Devil used in that assault; but which is more strange and most discernible, what is found on the soul by these horrid injections, and impetuous incitements within to blaspheme, and to have thoughts here that are *horribilia de Deo*, & *terribilia de fide*; where it may be judged some of these motions, that the damned in hell continually have, do there offer to infect the Christian's soul; what an assault this might have been in that messenger of Satan *Paul* had to buffet him, the Scripture does not particularly witness: but it is clear, *Job* was no stranger to these invenomed arrows, and some approach that way no less to his soul and the inward man, than his body was sore and pained. Now in setting down this instance, I only intend to shew how such a strange trial by an extraordinary power and influence of the Devil there is, and certainly known to the saints, that may witness, how easy it is for the Lord to raise a storm within, amidst the greatest peace and calm without, such as all the world cannot make still; and how sore an immediate touch of his hand on the soul and conscience is, as

well as the body, yea, how then it may be clearly seen to be something above natural causes. 1. In that horror and consternation is therewith, to which no pain or torment in the flesh can be compared. 2. That it is not a singular and rare instance, but in all times such an assault have many of the faints had, though I know its supposed singularity makes it the more terrible to some. 3. That in the same way and method it is still remarkably shaped. 4. Yea, where no defect of natural judgment and parts to influence such a thing can in the least be seen. 5. How visible a force this is from without, injecting that which can have no correspondence with their corruption within, but is such, that even corrupt nature is affrighted at. 6. Such that discernibly takes advantage and gains ground by fear, and flying before it. 7. I shall add but this, as these have their lucid intervals, in this case it is known also, how prayer and serious wrestling with God by the Mediator hath been still its best cure, and found more effectual here than all physicians, as being a wound from that hand which goes above all human reach and skill.

Seet. 13. One instance more I shall add, to what hath been held forth on this subject, how near an approach of that great truth is even here; and a begun discovery in the event of the *state and condition of men beyond time*, that *there is a heaven and a hell after this life*, and death is not the last point to put a final period to a rational being. I confess this is one of the greatest objects of our faith, and whatever present thoughts we can now have thereof, yet such is that glorious estate above, and the horror of hell, as will be an unspeakable surprise to all who come there, and find that they never had a conception of before; but it is sure also that even here more may be witnessed to men's senses, with that demonstrative evidence of the truth, both of the one and the other, yea, in some degree begun upon the earth, than most are aware of, or will let themselves know. It is strange how little this seems to be understood, and what distance we have in our thoughts, with the being, and reality of these great things, as if heaven and hell, were some abstract notions

only, which lie hid in the Scripture, and consider not what near and sensible approaches of both are here.

As to the first, that glorious state of the saints above, how marvellous a discovery is of this, and that begun enjoyment thereof even here: when a Christian so assuredly knows 1. in how large a measure the joy of his presence is let forth, the fulness whereof is this day in heaven, with these sensible embraces betwixt Jesus Christ and the soul, which are found above all expression; and that this must certainly be some part of the pleasure above which having no affinity with the flesh, bring in such serenity and calmness to the heart, and doth afford that solace and true delight which the whole earth could not do. 2. As it is sure, there is a clear and sensible perception of spiritual objects the saints have in this life, which to men by nature are as far above their reach, as the things of another world; is not something also here to be known of that glorified eye the redeemed have above, by that near capacity the pure in heart are put in to see God; which is more than seems to be believed. 3. It is known and sure, how marvellous transforming that of the soul is by grace, and in so far a removing its earthly quality, so as to make it even in this present state transparent, and pure in part, that the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ may shine in them. Yea, thus what a discernible ripening there is and making such meet for that state above, by all these degrees of a Christian's growth here, whereby they are changed from glory to glory, which really is some kind of a begun translation of the saints to heaven, as there is a coming further up to that full stature of the man in Christ. 4. We know there is a near and immediate converse with God here sensibly enjoyed, which no words can make others know what the saints thus see and feel, as these near approaches to heaven this way; but such a certainty is found thereof, that no dying Christian but with some confidence can say, though he change his place, yet will it not be a change of his company. 5. And is not something of this made also discernible to others, how such oft have come forth with their

face as it were shining, and a visible appearance upon them of some near approach they have then had to the invisible God, and another world, that may shew where they have been, and that the cause must be certain, when the effects thereof are so real. 6. It is known what high degrees of a triumphant joy even here are reached by the saints in following the Lord, and upon some special venture for him in doing or suffering, which is as it is then found upon their soul to be a joy unspeakable, it may clearly shew there is more of heaven in real possession than most do believe, though these get not leave to dwell and have a settled abode in this height, but must come down to swatter in the depths, and have their weeping hours over sins, and the prevalence of their own corruption. 7. Is it not both seen and felt in the ordinances, what a brightness sometimes is therewith on the soul, and how piercing a sound may be audibly heard there beyond words, with that ineffably sweet and fragrant favour of his name, as ointment poured forth, which to a spiritual eye can bring such an evidence of the truth of a heaven, as men can have of the sun though under a cloud, by some rays and beams breaking out thence, or by the first breakings up of the morning that it is sure there must be a greater light to follow. 8. Are not these times oft here with a Christian, when no cloud is betwixt heaven and their soul; but such a clear sky and brightness of God's face, with the sensible intimation of pardon, than which no audible voice from without could be more certainly heard, and then is the conscience found to acquit when men are ready to condemn. 9. What does the strong actings of love and desire in the soul of a Christian witness? is it not to shew that native tendency these have to their original, and how they have not forgot the way home, for it is sure that nothing which is come from above can take up its rest here. 10. This cannot be possibly hid, what marvellous transports of joy and delight have been oft witnessed by some of the saints, in their most extreme sufferings for the truth, who had life and sense, and were flesh and blood as well as others; that except men shut their

eyes it might be easy to discern, these had got a sight which could look them out of trouble and pain, and cause them rejoice when their body was burning, and that it is sure more of an actual possession of heaven, and some fore-taste of the glory there, is thus found under the saddest lot of a Christian, than was ever known, or conceived by such as are at a distance. 11. How discernible may this be, even to the astonishment of by-standers, that some of the saints dying on their bed have got up then to the sight-hill of heaven, so as all might perceive their soul raised, when their body was most remarkably pulled down, and so far the veil drawn by, that it might be clear such with the opening of their prison-door, had a light beyond it, and saw that which no words could express. Oh! if on-lookers knew or could conceive what by the eyes of some of the dying saints is then seen, it would make them long more to follow on. But this I must say it is a loss to the church, that some of such great and extraordinary glances given from the Lord at these times; and convincingly then witnessed have not been more seriously regarded; now as a further witness to this, I must add what the world cannot but know, how usual it is for fore wrestlings, and bitter complaints to go before such a bright sun-shine, to shew here can be no counterfeit.

I am the more pressed to touch this subject, it is so strange, the deep impressions of a *Heaven*, and being for ever with God, are so rare now on men's souls, when even upon the earth so sensible and near a correspondence might be had therewith. Oh is our life in such a continued throng, that there is no room, no time to be found with the hurry of other things, for Christians thus alone with themselves to be at work, and press on their own heart, not only these great and marvellous discoveries of that glory to come, which are so clear and express in the word, but what near and demonstrative evidences even to our senses may be found here of the certainty thereof, if some deep reflections were on these things. 1. What can be more as a seal in our hand to quiet the soul about these great assurances of heaven we have in the

Scripture; than that continued witness before us of the certainty, and taking place of this blessed record, in all that concerns the church or any of the saints within time? yea, how clear it is; nothing hath failed hitherto of its truth, in the strangest things thereof, which seemed most contradicting to sense and reason. 2. It is sure, none knows the truth of holiness, whose alone witness to this is from without, and such they can only read in the Bible; but there is a *knowing within themselves*, and such a hid demonstration of the being and certainty of heaven to be found upon their soul; that though nothing is more clear, and really felt, yet can none possibly impart what it is to others; nor could it be believed at a distance, or once enter into men's thoughts, what a sight some have here with these discoveries of the new name and white stone, even in the way of the word and promise, of that glorious state which is above. 3. What a sensible converse may these have with the truth and certainty of heaven, who know the real *being of spiritual things*? And as sure it is, the soul hath its senses as well as the body, not only to discern, but really partake of these enjoyments and delights, that can have no rise, nor in the least be influenced from any outward things; so thus a peculiar sweetness and delight, and most sensible pleasure is there oft found in things most bitter and grievous to the flesh, as clearly shews that undoubted correspondence which is here with a higher state and invisible world, and how marvellous a suiting there is of these objects to a spiritual life and being; since it is sure the fountain-cause and spring-head must be real, whence an unspeakable joy is oft in so immediate a way let forth on the soul, when most separate and abstract from the body; and nothing of an outward cause for it; Is not this demonstrative of such a joy to be here found, and its being no dream, which the Scripture calls *full of glory*. 4. Hath not each Christian to witness even to his senses, the truth of another world, and that blessed state above; a known and real tendency of grace in the soul to be still upward, after more near approaches to JESUS CHRIST, and a higher state than is here, which with as na-

tive a motion is found as the fire can move up to its proper place; yea, how sensible an interposition the flesh still causeth betwixt him and such glorious objects. So that heaven and this earth he cannot but see to be as two opposite points, like the north and south pole, as the one goes up, so far does the other go down; as the one comes in sight and account, so far is the other out of sight and estimation; and thus an higher ascent of the soul in more spirituality and abstractness from things seen, is as one leaving the shore, who the further he goes into the deep, the land is less discerned. 4. It is sure such as know the truth of holiness cannot but see, what an advance each step of its further growth hath in a real assimilation and likeness to some higher state than is here; and that it is no shadow, but a drawing interest and power must be there, which can cause such strong emotions of love and desire to an unseen world; yea, that the body is as a prison to the soul, by its longings, and looking out to another place, whilst love hath taken so much of it already away as can go; in this present condition, because mortality cannot enter into immortality. 5. And is it not sure and obvious to our senses, how real an intercourse and passage is here betwixt the soul of a Christian and an invisible world, whither the continued haunts and resort of such do so much lie, where they drive so blessed a trade, and have most certain returns? It was not strange, that *Jacob's* heart should fail, the thing was so far above his faith, of *Joseph's* being truly alive; but when so visible a confirmation by the sight of the chariots and waggons was further given, though his wondering ceased not, yet did it cause his spirit revive.

Sect. 14. It is sure also, the world cannot but see *there is a Hell*, which lieth not so hid in the threatenings of the world, but is in some degree both felt and visibly witnessed here; and so far a begun possession of its horror and torment, that the greatest Atheists may know it is a matter of earnest, and no night-dream, if they did not hide themselves from such a sight; Now for this some undeniable evidences, even to men's sense, of its reality I offer, in a time when by most of this ge-

neration it seems to be looked on as a disputable thing, and in so ordinary a way passed; yea amongst the best these are so rare, who are found to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. 1. Is not this visible, and in some degree begun here in these everlasting stings and scorching flames which are there, by that horror of conscience and insufferable torment known in the case of many, as that of *Spira Latomus*, yea, with most remarkable instances of this kind in every age, where the world might see the truth of a hell drawn as in a picture before their eyes, and how certainly this is begun, not only in the pain of loss, but in the very pain of sense; so as even here some of the screeches of the damned there, can be no hid or unknown thing to the world. 2. Is not hell and the truth of that horrid estate brought near men's eyes, by these strange effects which some begun degrees thereof could only cause, such as to blaspheme and rage against God, because of his plagues, a fury and violence against the truth beyond the ordinary rate of men's natural enmity thereat, with that impetuous pressure and incitement, which may be seen thereto; yea, hath not *Cain's* cry been heard from many, *my punishment is heavier than I can bear*; such a sudden breaking up of the conscience, where nothing but stupidity was before, that hath made some seek to be rid of themselves; as a desperate essay to be rid of this, and others plunge themselves in sensuality to deaden the sense of their pain and torment, by getting more near to the condition of beasts. 3. Can it be hid from the world, or the most ordinary observers, what is so frequently obvious, how there is a coming within sight of hell, by some here upon the near approach of death, that like the hand writing on the wall to *Belsazzar* causeth a terror and trembling sense on them, beyond what they could have from a present dissolution of nature. 4. Is there not something of that faith the fallen angels have in hell, whose torment is to believe, and yet are constrained with terror thereto, visibly witnessed here? whereby many thus are haunted whether they will or no with the dread of God who hate him, and their torment is from too

great an evidence of the truth. 5. Can it be hid, how many of this generation, are so visibly transformed into the image of the Devil, and turned as it were into the same kind, with these desperate spirits, that human nature, though corrupt, would even dread at some acts of wickedness, and opposition to God, these are found to take pleasure in. 6. And is not that association which is in hell with the Devil and his angels actually begun here, in so immediate a converse with them, and explicit engaging in their service, by many who for this end, renounce the very name and profession of being Christians, which the world cannot possibly deny? yea, for this cause I may say, even these horrid wretches serve, and are a most confirming sight before us to the truth, to let men know hell is no fable, when such are found in the earth, and dwell among us, whose continued trade and intercourse is with these powers of darkness. 7. It is known to be no dream or shadow, what frequent apparitions there are of the inhabitants of that place, these wicked spirits, and how much they haunt the world, whose continued work is to incite men to wickedness, and oppose the kingdom of Christ, that it is strange how little we are affected therewith, and should not thence have some deeper reflection on the being and certainty of a hell. 8. So far is that after-state made visible here, by a delivering many up to such astonishing obduration of mind, that to the conviction of all, they may be seen bound over in the prison, and kept under chains, so as they cannot stir until death come to bring them to the rack, this is no rare sight in the world, yet such a *preludium* of hell, and so near a step to it, that it may be clearly seen, such a sentence from the great judge, *depart from me*, is even here past, and made effectual, how they are put in the executioner's hand, shut out from means of their help, the Scripture bound up and sealed, from having any more access to their soul; and thus no more to do, but to be carried from the goal to the final stroke. 9. There is a map and shadow of that eternal punishment the world may also see in some terrible acts of divine judgment within time, such as have been publicly known, and a

visible hand from heaven therein on persecutors of the truth, apostates, and blasphemers.

CHAP. III.

SOME great events of the holy Scripture, are held forth in the preceeding chapter, to witness what a seal this day is in our sight, to the truth and faithfulness of God there; and hath in the darkeſt times of the church been remarkably continued before her, which I am ſure were they rightly looked on and brought near our thoughts, might be more demonstrative of God, and the exceeding greatneſs of his power, than any extraordinary ſigns or miracles could be. I ſhall but touch three inſtances further, with ſome peculiar reſpect to theſe laſt times; which as they are clear and undeniable before us; they convincingly witness alſo of what ſingular uſe, ſome of the moſt dark and aſtoniſhing depths of providence about the church in this preſent day are to confirm, and ſeal the Scripture.

See. 1. Firſt we ſee a ſtroke of *judicial induration, and blindness of mind upon the Jews to this day continued*, after ſo great a light, and brightneſs of the goſpel; and when all poſſible grounds and props they formerly leaned on, are to their own conviction now made void, which is indeed one of the ſtrange wonders under the *New-Teſtament* we have before us: but was not this foretold? and by the Holy Ghoſt ſhewed to the church, what we ſee, with the very firſt dawning of the goſpel, Rom. xi. 8. xii. 2. 2 Cor. iii. 14. And how ſuch a myſtery ſhould be underſtood, yea, the long continuance of that ſtroke made ſo clear, as to make it a further confirmation of the truth, ſince it is ſure that *blindneſs upon Iſrael* is concluded there, under a judicial arreſt, until the *fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in*; now if this were not before us in the *Bible*, could we poſſibly know or comprehend ſuch a thing, what ſo viſible a with-holding the very exerciſe of men's reaſon can mean, that they ſee not the light in the noon-day: But here is a darkneſs, for our further enlightening, and a

stroke on them which might be of greatest use to strengthen us more in the truth, when that so strange a veil is still over their mind that they cannot see.

1. How the *Old Testament* is the very foundation of Christianity, and that there the gospel, the greatest secret, which from the bosom of the Father was ever revealed to men doth conspicuously shine forth; whose brightness now under the *New Testament*, though it hath a greater light, yet is it no new light: for to him do *Moses* and the prophets bear witness, so that you cannot cite a more clear testimony from any of the evangelists to the *Messiah's* sufferings, and the church's being redeemed that way than you may have, Isa. liii. Dan. iv. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Psal. xxii. 18.

2. Can men have their eyes open, and not see, that the whole scheme, and *æconomy* of the Jewish service, is a most clear shadow, and idea of the gospel, and how that dark body of their ceremonies and types, have thence only their light; for who could look on the Ark, the Mercy-seat, their Passover, Scape-goat, &c. and not discern some divine mystery thus shadowed forth? That surely the blood of atonement, their sin-offerings, and sacrifices, were not the true victim offered to God, but had a figurative relation to some other propitiatory sacrifice, on whom the sins of men were actually laid.

3. What possibly can be more clear than this? That in the gospel as the center all these shadows did meet, which do now cease, their full end and accomplishment being come; and if men look on that pattern and frame of the Jewish service, can they see it, and not know the building itself by it? and how exact a correspondence is thus betwixt them, that so strange a multiplication of these figures and types, which were then of divine appointment; nothing is there inept, or useless, but had a peculiar use, and relation to something in the gospel; that as face answereth to face in the glass, one may see there is the shadow, and lo here the substance, where all is found, and that their light is now gone and extinguished, because the sun itself is risen.

4. Men could hardly believe, if they did not see this with their eyes, with what veneration the Jews can admit the *Old Testament*, and yet deny the *Messiah* to be come. They know it is many ages past, since their father's looked for him, and with greater expectations were awaked to such a hope, near these times of the gospel than they now are. They know *Daniel's* seventy weeks is a piece of canonical Scripture, which clearly takes in his coming, and though it were taken either for weeks of days, or of years, it must be long since expired, but if they should mean weeks of ages, then for many thousand years his coming could not yet be expected. How strange a veil must this be on their mind? which may be no less obvious, than that they cover themselves with, at the reading of the law.

But what a witness is here also to the truth, to silence Atheism about the divinity of the Scripture, if it were brought near our thoughts, that such a nation and race there is, and kept up to this day as a living witness to let the world see 1. How unanswerable an evidence this is to their senses, of the truth of that renowned kingdom, and church of *Israel*, to whom the oracles of God were committed, and once by a special mark of his favour separated from the nations, (tho' now it is turned into a curse) which to the conviction of all, even of the greatest Atheists, may shew it is no imposture, or romance, which by the Scripture is held forth; but such a visible witness there yet is of its truth, as men have of a flourishing city, when such ruins are seen, as bear the evident marks of its former grandeur. 2. We cannot but see such a people kept by themselves, and not mixed with the nations, whose fathers from one generation to another did own and embrace the *Old Testament* as the word of God; and which is demonstratively clear, could not therein be instructed by the Christian church, whom with the greatest opposition and malice they have still pursued, to witness there is no possible collusion can be here. 3. Thus the world may see a people that are known enemies to the Christian faith; who yet confess, and own that doctrine, in which the truth

and substance of Christianity is clearly shewed forth, and do fully acknowledge that truth of the *Messiah* to redeem, and deliver the church, is the undoubted promise of God. 4. And is it not sure such are this day in our sight, that once were an united and flourishing state in their own land, whose stroke and judgment in its manner and continuance being now for 1500 years, is such as no instance present or past through the world, could ever be found to resemble; but as a beacon on a high hill calls aloud to every age and time of the church, to enquire what means such a strange and amazing sight as this of the Jews.

Sect. 2. The second instance I here offer, to shew how great a witness to the truth and the glorious being of God is in these last times before us; is *that amazing stroke of induration on the Romish church*, so strange a thing this is, after such clear breaking up of the truth, how men can at once exercise reason and be popish; yea in the matters of an eternal interest, that should lie so near, to wrestle with a light that so clearly shews, if the Scripture be true they are undone, and for ever ruined. Here is one of the greatest depths of the judgment of God in the earth; but expressly foretold, 2 Thes. ii. 11. That such a delusion must be, and Rev. xvi. 8, 9, 10. What entertainment the light was to meet with from this party, in a blaspheming and further rage, instead of repenting: and that the darkening of their kingdom, should make them gnaw their tongue with pain; but not cease to oppose themselves to the clearest evidence of the truth. We should have thought it almost not possible for the Popish interest to gain more ground by seduction, now after such a shining forth of the gospel, whatever advantage in former times it had, and in many parts yet hath, by fear and constraint; but this needs not be strange, when Atheism and ignorance are found so effectual to usher it in, and hath a bait therewith so well suited to a licentious time: it is easy for them to quit the truth who never knew it, or received it in love: and the world may see, that such who fall off to that way, are engaged this day, not on debate, and from ar-

guments to the judgment. Some particulars I shall here instance, which are known, and owned by the *Romish* church, and amongst the most concerning articles of their faith, that all may see and consider, how these possibly can suit with the serious exercise of reason and judgment, and their professed owning the divinity of the Scripture: if such a judicial stroke as is there expressly foretold were not thus convincingly verified.

First, That men must quit that judgment of discerning given them of God, and not trust their own eyes, but others, in the great interest of salvation; yea, thus with their consent be shut out from all proper knowledge of the Scripture, and so far take the church-guides for the Bible, as on their testimony they must resolve their faith, even whilst they cannot but see the greatest of these more swayed with the concerns of the earth than of heaven, and none more involved in its affairs than such are; yea, when nothing is more expressly contrary to the command of God both under the law, Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9. and under the gospel, John v. 39. what an astonishing thing is this?

2. Is it not like a stroke of madness, to own a blind obedience to men amongst the heights and excellencies of their faith, and account ignorance a part of religion in such a world where deceit and falsehood are so much in fashion; and thus in their soul's concerns trust these whose credit and testimony without some further surety they would fear to take for a sum of money? Oh! what is this for men to adventure with their eyes shut in the great things of heaven and eternity, and yet not be struck with some fear and jealousy, yea, when so many thousands, who are known to be rational and serious in their way, do solemnly declare what a contradiction the doctrine of their church is to the express letter of the Scripture, and therein offers an appeal to their own enquiry and trial, if they will credit that blessed record, if there it be not clearly found, they are deceived and ruined by their spiritual guides. Sure it is, that much less ground of suspicion would cause such open their eyes to try the best securities they have about any outward interest.

3. Is it not clear, that no such slavery is exerted on the bodies of the greatest drudges under the *Turks*, as is here on men's souls, who see, and yet may not admit their own sight of the plainness and perspicuity of this Scripture, nor this record it bears of itself, that it is fitted to make the simple wise, were it never so clear and plain before them, but must take it from others on trust, that the Christian faith held forth in the Scripture, is not there held forth in intelligible words by the Holy Ghost, but a mass of dead characters, without sense, until their church-guides put a meaning on it; on which they must resolve their faith, though any should see it most cross to its plain and genuine sense, yea while they are forced to confess, if they pretend no extraordinary revelation, that the special illumination of the Spirit, by which the word is savingly understood, can from no private Christian be shut up, more than from the greatest doctors of the church.

4. How amazing a thing is it, to see how far men dare venture, where scarce a shadow or school-problem can be found to take hold on, as to the great foundation of the *Romish* church, and of all that structure of the primacy and infallibility of her head, which is an alledged presidence of *Peter* amongst the apostles, and some human traditions thereabout; for it is undeniable, this is the whole on which without further enquiry no less weight is laid over, than the interest and eternal saving or perishing of many millions of souls, they and their children which are concerned therein; and it is sure, if this presidence of *Peter* fall, and have no solid ground in Scripture, so that it be evinced, the rock on which the Christian church is built is Jesus Christ, and not *Peter*; then rusheth all the building down, with that high power and infallibility of the *Pope*, which must fall therewith; and if this fall and be found a cheat, then all his pardons and absolutions founded on that plenary power on which so innumerable a multitude build their peace, and take as their acquittance into eternity, are gone, and can do no good, yea such ruined and undone who have trusted their souls thereto; now who is there would adventure the smallest outward interest on

such a ground, where if men would but come to be in earnest, nothing can be more clear than this from the Scripture, that the power of the keys was given to the rest of the apostles as well as to *Peter*, Mat. xviii. 18. 19. And that he did exercise no such preface amongst them, see Acts xv. Nor can the least solid ground be to judge, he was ever at *Rome*, or had the least peculiar tie thereto, beyond the rest of the apostles.

5. As it is a horrid blasphemy and expressly contrary to the Scripture to join human tradition with it, and give the same authority thereto, to decide and ground the church's faith about the truth. It is a strange contradiction to reason for men to suppose or lay weight on the infallibility of tradition, and clear uninterrupted delivery of the church's sense on the written word this way, when they cannot but know, what opposition general counsels have had to others in the greatest truths, the frequent justlings of the fathers together; yea, is it possible tradition could be a sure conveyance of the doctrine of the church, and its sense on the Scripture, when the whole Christian world was almost turned *Arians*, that there seemed to be but one *Athanasius* left, and after that falling off to *Mahometanism*, when such times were that stars seemed to fall from heaven, and so many churches once famous, swallowed up under this black darkness; and it is sure, men cannot but see, how far a relation will vary and become unlike itself, in a very short time. Oh! what a strange thing must delusion be, and a judicial blindness of the mind?

6. Is not here a thing so grossly absurd, that may tempt men to Atheism, and question the certainty of all truth? to hazard an eternal interest and satisfaction of divine justice on some plenary indulgence given out of the church's treasure, and this from a supposed over-plus of merit in some of the saints, who had more than enough for themselves, though such, whom they must confess were sinners when they were upon the earth, nor can deny that the Scripture sheweth by one sacrifice is the redemption of the elect church for ever made perfect. I confess, if it were a matter of small moment, and some outward hazard only, men might sport at so

notable an imposture; but Oh! in a business of eternal salvation and condemnation, how sad and deplorable a sight is this?

7. But admitting such strange principles they own, can they possibly shun such a discovery, at what an uncertainty their souls are thus ventured, or how any can be secure. 1. If such merits they lean on were indeed more than their own need, whose they are, did require. 2. Tho' such an over-plus were a truth, can they be sure, in whose hands these were intrusted to dispense, or what is their proper right or warrant to apply them, when for this from the Scripture there is no shadow, and from them the world cannot possibly know. 3. How are they sure, but by a long continued application, in so many thousand plenary indulgences founded thereon, they may be already exhausted, and lost their wonted strength; but Oh! an answer to all these astonishing things is too evident, that a judicial stroke from the Lord is such that no reason is able to cure.

8. This may be the more wonderful, when it is so clear, except men will shut their own eyes, that here is a lucrative interest, money for merit, as the procuring cause, for want of which the poor and friendless must perish; and thus the high-way robber, if he can save his neck, is sure to have his soul safe by giving some part of the purse he hath taken to the priest. Thus no absolute necessity for one to be religious and rich at once, who hath enough whereby to purchase the merit of others, and how to expiate all guilt, and secure his after hazard by present money, and a liberal hand to the church.

9. How sad and amazing a sight is it, to see men so infatuate in the veneration of the relicks of the saints, and ascribe such efficacy thereto, both spiritual and for outward diseases; when if they would open their eyes, there is such manifest appearance of deceit, that they know they must pay for their toil and respect to such things to them who visibly pursue their own gain that way, and can have no assurance, but such may be the bones of some malefactors, and that it be an im-

posture rather than a miracle, how the milk of the Virgin Mary 1500 years, and the bones of the apostles should be kept uncorrupted, when the attestors thereof all may see, have that politic interest of money for it, which in every time drives many thousands not to deceive others only, but to ruin their own souls.

10. How strange a contradiction is here for men to admit the morality of the first and second command, as the law of their God, and its being perpetually binding, which so expressly says, *Thou shalt not bow down, nor worship the likeness of any thing, &c.* and yet both authoritatively determine and practise the contrary. It is sure there, all adoration of the invisible God, under a visible representation is most plainly forbidden; and that Aaron's calf, and these at Dan and Bethel, though the worship thereof was intended for their true God, yet by him was found idolatry. But what subtilty of distinctions, or of that respect pretended therein to the prototype can make one's pillow soft on their death-bed, when they must instantly pass in before his tribunal, whose law they have thus used.

11. As it is clearly repugnant to the Scripture, how strange a contradiction to reason is here? That there should be a transubstantiating of the bread and wine in the sacrament into the real body and blood of Jesus Christ; when

1. It can be no more a sacrament, when turned into the thing signified.
2. Can the accidents, such as colour, taste, smell, possibly remain and exist without the subject.
3. Can one and the same numerical body, which is finite, be in the same moment of time in many thousand places through the earth, remotely distant from other; yea, thus can there be a penetration of bodies when all must confess, the nature of bodily substances is to be impenetrable. How sad a sight is it, for so many to resign the liberty of their souls so far to others, that they must quit both sense and reason at once, and may not search the Scripture to know what is held forth there.

12. Can it be supposed, such are in earnest, if there be not

a judicial stroke on their judgment, to pray to one dead man in the behalf of another? to these who cannot hear, for them who are past help? yea, that men should be so far without fear and feeling, as to reckon a liberty to destroy themselves some special advantage, and that a dispensation from the Pope for violating the express law and command of God, will be enough to stand betwixt them and his avenging justice.

I shall further add but this one instance here (having some occasion to give a more full account of their doctrine in the close of this treatise) how strange and amazing a thing is it for men to plead, yea, ground their faith so much on an uninterrupted succession in their church; when yet they expressly hold a nullity both of baptism and ordination, if the intention of the priest stand not right thereto, and that this is essentially necessary for it; for thus how shall the world know, but most of their Popes and Clergy be both without baptism, and still laicks without ordination; and so no possible access for the church to know either the certainty of succession, or infallibility of a Judge.

These few particulars I have only instanced of the doctrine, and known tenets of the Romish church, to witness how convincing a seal this is to the Scripture, in so strong a delusion, these are visibly given up to, for which I do appeal their conscience, and that confession themselves make to the world, if any thing contrary to these principles they publicly own and admit be here charged upon them. It is a sight I confess should be sad, to see so great a darkening of the truth, and so much of the Christian world perish, and will not once open their eyes; but it is well such a clear discovery is here also, which on another account calls to rejoice, and be more strengthened in the way of the Lord, that we know such a party is this day in the earth, and before us, whose being, appearance, and these advantages they now boast of, are so undeniable a witness to the truth, if we consider these things.

1. There is such a piece of the Scripture, that foretells the man of sin, the manner of his approach, with the whole def-

tiny of his reign and fall, which must needs take place, and have an application to some particular party, except we quit all certainty of divine truth, for if one line, or one syllable of this should fail, we were done, and our security in the greatest interest broken, since the faithfulness of God stands good for every part of his word as well as the whole. 2. It is clear this picture was drawn by the Holy Ghost, of such an adversary, now a thousand five hundred years past, what should be his form, and shape, the way of his appearance, with his true proportion and lineaments. 3. Except we deny our senses, it is certain, that such we see with our eyes, as are there shewed forth, so as none ever knew more clearly the face of a man, by seeing his picture exquisitely done, and to the life, in a frame, than the church this day may know the Antichrist, and find him out. I suppose one in some remote part of the earth were brought to understand the Scriptures, and in his enquiry there, were astonished with these discoveries he finds of so strange an adversary, with an earnest desire to know if he hath been yet made known to the world, let him have a true and particular account of the *Romish* church in its complex frame and state, in its duration, the way of their rule, and in how different a mould it is cast from all the kingdoms of the world, his own eyes and reason, though nothing from others were told, might shew how clear and exact a resemblance is to be found there to that map and discovery, which with amazement he had before seen and read in the Bible. 4. Is it not to admiration now obvious, how many ages past, these were foretold about this adversary, as they are this day before us in the event, when not the least shadow or appearance of such future emergencies was to be seen, or could have entered into men's thoughts, to shew this, only from the Holy Ghost could have been revealed to the church, to whom all his works are known from the beginning. 5. Where were we if such a sight were not this day, as the *Romish* church, what now it is, and in former ages hath been, and how sore a dash and crushing should it be to the faith of the saints, to cause a questioning

of the whole Scripture, when such concerning prophecies that respect most of the times of the New Testament, have no being in the event nor now possibly could have; for according to the word it is clear, this great adversary in his rise must begin with the very first times of the church under the New Testament, and his continuance such, that the last stroke, and his being utterly abolished is to be one of the nearest prefaces of the second coming of the LORD.

Sett. 3. There is one great event of the Scripture I shall further add, which in so dark a day might press a more serious enquiry and observation thereof, to see how this answers the promise, when so obvious and sensible a contradiction seems none to it; *that a more flourishing state of the church should be in these last times on the ruins, and downfall of Antichrist's kingdom, which cannot go back under all these assaults and oppositions of men, but is such that the one interest must advance, and the other further decline.* This is a truth we know the Lord hath insured by his faithfulness, 2 Thes. ii. 8. Rev. xvii. 13. and chap. xvi. compared with xx. 1, 2, 3, 4. which does so evidently contemperate therewith; to which also many prophecies that concern the state of the church in the latter days bear a most clear witness; that the most eminent appearances of God, the greatest enlargement, and of the longest continuance, that his church should have under the New Testament to meet in such a period of time, and then should her spring begin, after a long and sharp winter that went before; it is clear also, that the time of the promise is certainly come, which causeth great thoughts of heart unto many, whilst so much from present sense seems to speak a visible contradiction thereto; for it cannot be denied, that the Lord's work about the reformed church looks now every where to be a work of judgment, we see searching trials, some amazing depths, and intricacies of providence, how strange a meeting there is this day of contrary tides, that seem to drive most back, and on every hand to bring in difficulties, yea, such a present darkness and faint almost on all, as former times of the church did not know; but to wit-

ness the certainty of the promise, that the world may see the God of the reformed church doth still own that interest, and this his word, who is faithful and true, yea, that nothing is here; but what may strengthen more than shake; these things I offer to be seriously considered.

1. When such a present darkness is, is it not known also? how bright a day did go before this, and what an immediate appearance of God by most stupendous providences then was to rescue his truth, and people from the power of Antichrist, so that though our night should be more dark, none can question such a seal, which before the sun, to the amazement, and conviction of the world, with so full a witness and assurance on the spirits of his people, yea, I must say with extraordinary signs and confirmations from himself, he hath put to the cause of the reformed church.

2. It is known in every step of the church's rising, that whatever instruments in an ordinary way could promise, yet something far above this both in their calling forth, and excitement, and actings hath been clearly witnessed, to shew that immediate holding from heaven, and by an extraordinary divine power, for verifying of the promise the reformed church hath of her possession and interest?

3. Is it not easy this day to see so sad and dismal an hour now upon the church is not more obvious than the provoking cause, and the righteousness of God no less clear therein than the cloud is dark, for I must say, these many years past who could have their eyes about them, and not fear upon so visible a departure from the truth, and falling off from love, tenderness and the power of religion, through all the reformed churches, but that either the Scripture should fail, and want its accomplishment, or some remarkable stroke was near; yea, that a sharp cure the church must have, or else be undone, and the judgment of God be an help, when all other means have proved so ineffectual; and should it not be a strengthening remark in such a day, that the church's zeal and straightness, and her sun shine have been seen to rise and set together.

4. Amidst these strange disappointments of the times, and visible breaking of human props, it is known also, how carnally the weapons of our warfare have been managed; how fond upon the grandeur of a civil state, and the shadow and friendship of great men, as though the Spirit of the Lord had not done more than all human might or power, to put the churches on their feet; Thus have we gone out of the way of our strength, and founded our confidence on grounds of sense, and forgot these great appearances of God in times of greatest weakness, where there was much trusting, and little sense; and it may be too clearly seen, how few amongst the throng of professed protestants, know what it is to have the Bible for the security of the protestant interest, and thus quiet their soul, though all the foundations seem to shake, because they know the cause is certainly God's, and he is faithful who hath promised.

5. It is most discernible, that as no outward advantage put in the church's hand, but hath still some further weight laid thereon than it could bear; so have we seen such a dependence make the most promising means to miscarry. Oh! for many years have not our eyes been shut, to discern how far our strength hath departed, by so large a reckoning upon visible props, the support and countenance of princes, while we forgot the guide of our youth, and the covenant of our God, that for this hath the church's hair been cut, and exposed to their contempt, who sometimes were forced to look upon her with fear and wondering, when God was known in her palaces for a refuge. It is sure carnal confidence hath a curse waiting on it in the Bible, Jer. xvii. 8. and where the Lord hath cursed, none can make it thrive.

6. Yet under so sad a discovery, and whatever as to public appearances may be seen of the Lord's departure, it is sure there hath been no such time that a man can say, his uprightness and love to the truth fails him, or ceaseth to have inward joy and peace following it, and that in any secret corner, where integrity and straightness is found, there wants a witness of God's taking pleasure therein. No, ere this

fail, the shadow must cease to follow the body. It is indeed an hour of desertion; but such as lets us see our sin, but gives no dash to our duty. It is a witness for God against men's indifference, remissness, and carnal boasting in following the truth, but in itself a visible confirmation thereof, and thus doth the church more help than hurt.

7. We see this clear, that under the New Testament, the whole militant church as well as particular churches, hath her remarkable periods, as of tranquility, so of trouble, and demolishing, when sackcloth is every where shaped out for her; yea I must say it is not cross to the word, but may be further confirming thereto; that in so far as there is no thorough reformation, and some Antichristian mixture found amongst the reformed churches; in so far these also should get some touch of the judgment (though to heal, and not to ruin) that comes along with the pouring out of the vials on the throne of the beast.

8. So fore a desertion is found not only to suit the times of the gospel, but the best times thereof, and to a rising day of the church, for this in the way and method of providence is most clear, that no great piece of the Lord's work for his truth and people hath been ever brought forth, but with sore wrestlings, and is seen to stay long in the birth, the most remarkable mercies have been first lost, and made hopeless before they were found, yea no observable brightness but by some dark hour hath been ushered in, for which there needs no particular instance, as in *Egypt*, and in *Mordecai's* time, since the whole Scripture doth witness this.

9. We have this day seen nothing but what might have been looked for, that the trials of the church should be suited to her light, and keep some proportion therewith, and where so great a trust, and talent hath been given, such searching times must come about, to seek in its return, and improvement, for this answers to the way of the Lord and his word; nor is it strange to see a people's stroke and trouble suited to that degree of their former exaltation: See Luke xii. 48. What sharp and perplexing times are there after so large a

measure of light held forth, nor is it strange, these things fall in with our day, which did not meet the reformed churches at their breaking up, who had not our discoveries of the truth with so long, and bright shining forth of the light.

10. This should not be strange, when the faith of the saints hath got great confirmations, that searching times then follow, for where nothing is to shake and offend, there can be no tried establishment. See John xvi. *Do you now believe, faith our blessed Lord to his disciples, the hour is coming, and now is when you shall all be scattered.* This we find after such pains he had taken to confirm them, yea thus is it seen how trials are suited to the greatness of that work the Lord hath on foot. See Jer. xxix. 10. there is a time when all things cry, *be in pain*, and unusual wrestlings before some remarkable birth.

11. However present appearances look, we know a sad desertion, and the church's real growth, with her gaining ground, can at once suit together, whose true interest without taking a false measure; none can judge. 1. From outward grandeur, since oppression and greatest weights have been still found to make way for her growth, and for that end was *Pharaoh* raised of the Lord, to make the church's rising more conspicuous. 2. Not from the nearest, and immediate events, until the vision speak, and bring the whole complex providence before us. 3. Nor can a true measure be taken from the present reaping, since a hid growth is oft found, where the seed lies long under ground, which the children may reap, that seemed lost to these that went before. 4. Not from a great falling off, since the church's interest is oft no less promoted this way, and the truth sealed, than by the bringing in of others. 5. Not from sad afflicting times, since out of the greatest depths, hath the most near and sensible approach to God been known, which in the issue hath helped more to raise than all her troubles could ruin. 6. It is clear also, not from the indignation of the Lord gone forth against the church, can we take such a measure; since her bearing thereof is found a begun step in her relief, and to an o-

pen pleading of her cause, and bringing her forth to the light, Mic. vii. 9. where we see though the church is thus laid on the dust, yet is her interest kept alive in her cause, to bring her up with it, when the Lord shall declare his being a pleader thereof.

12. Though it now look like the going down of the sun on most of the reformed churches, and that therewith we have so affrighting a sight before us, what hath befallen many famous churches in former times; yet is there solid ground, I humbly judge without flattering ourselves, or any overstretching our hope, to see here these different periods of time, how such a sun-set, and the utter dissipation of these churches did then with a remarkable and sad *crisis* meet with the entry of that long and dismal night of Antichrist's reign, his begun rising, and that breaking in also of such a deluge of *Mahometism*, which did after follow, yea thus in a time, when having sinned away their light, the Scripture was to have an accomplishment in the Lord's departure, and that great work of his judgment then coming on the Christian world: But now we see, and certainly know, how this strange and unusual darkness over the church, in a blessed conjunction and *crisis*, does meet with Antichrist's begun fall, and a growing light; and upon the church's rise, when the interest of the gospel now is upon the ascendant, and when it is so clear, what now is under the Mediator's hand to be brought forth; which is a farther extent of his visible kingdom to build, and not to cast down, to plant and not to cut off these churches, in the planting of which as ground gained from Antichrist, yea in pursuance of a full conquest he did so eminently appear.

I must further add this, though it seem to beget a fear, and hesitation with some; the ceasing of such great signs and appearances of the Lord, in the behalf of the truth that were once seen, and how to answer that question, *Where is the Lord God of our Elijahs*, and his great power, and out-stretched arm, by which he shewed terrible things for his people, as a return of their prayers. Let us consider, 1. It is the

same reproached and darkened cause of the protestant church, which God once visibly owned, and did bear witness to by great and extraordinary signs of his power, so that all may see it is not the truth, but falling off from it, with which he now quarrels. 2. Such extraordinary evidences we now are not to wait for, when so great a breaking up of light, beyond former times, hath been to clear the truth; for this were to tempt the most high, who at the first dawning of his work, when difficulties seemed in an ordinary way insuperable, did thus appear. 3. Even under such a cloud there want not some great and immediate confirmations from the Lord, and a visible witness from him to the cause of the Reformed church, if we had eyes to see. 1. That with the saddest hour, and exigence of the church, some step of providence hath still been made to appear, and therewith so remarkable a breaking forth of light, as it were out of the bowels of such a darkness, that the things which threatened most have more fully answered the church's mercy, than any way we could have chosen. No such black cloud hath been, but some enlightening providence, and marvellous witness of the Lord's condescendence we have seen as it were set over against it, yea still some new ground of hope made to break up, so as to balance with a day of greatest fears. 2. We cannot but see since the Lord hath made it so clear, that there is some hewing of stones, and preparing of materials under all this ruin, such as points at some great and excellent building, which yet is a bringing forward. 3. And hath there not been a discernible growth of light, and more clear discoveries of the truth that have gone forth with these ruining times. 4. How convincing a restraint from the Lord upon men's wrath, to pursue their advantage and power against the truth, and its followers, I must say hath to admiration been witnessed in this low estate of the reformed church, and such diverting providences as have constrained their violence to run in another channel. 5. This all may see for their confirming more in the truth, that these who in such a day have fallen off to Popery, have had their way visibly ushered in by Atheism.

and ignorance, or the bias of some outward interest, and thus found it easy to change their religion, who never yet in earnest embraced any, yea, to turn popish, ere they knew what it was to be Christians: Now for this I dare appeal the conscience of the most ordinary observers. 6. Hath there not been oft cause to observe how the greatest essays of the adversary, which seemed to speak a present ruin, have brought forth the very contrary effects. No such storm on the church but some rent thereby hath been paid to the truth: no present loss, but another way there was found some visible advantage, nor have such signs been wanting of the Lord's immediate appearance in the darkest hour, that may witness his people's gleanings are yet this day better than the full vintage of his adversaries; and with much solid assurance it may be further said, whatever former ages have seen of the Lord's marvellous doings to confirm his truth, and the cause of the reformed church, in the sight of the nations, there are yet greater things to be brought forth; and a rare history of providence shall be writ, and transmitted to the posterity where these two must be recorded together, and meet in one witness; which is foretold, Rev. xv. 3. *Great and marvellous are thy works O LORD: and just and true are thy ways.*

CHAP. IV.

IN prosecution of this subject, a second particular proposed, I shall here endeavour to clear, which is the *great import of the preceding demonstration, how marvellous a light doth thence result to the church*, and what a witness is this day of the near approach and condescendence of the Lord, to the faith of his people, and a price for wisdom thus put in their hand, by bringing forth his word, and the certainty of its taking place so convincingly before us in the event: which I must say, were it understood, might be of that use to make our believing and adventuring on the truth as plain and comfortable a way, and as fully quieting to the soul, as the way of sense and feeling; but Oh how strange is it, that whilst

such a thing cannot be hid, yet is so little laid to heart, that it seems most of Christians do not really know what is the estate they possess, but in their converse with supernatural truths, are like men half waking, who see things before them, yet is it so far a dream, that there wants a serious reflecting on the great reality of such things they see. Now to clear what a light breaks thus up to the church, from these discoveries of the faithfulness of God in his word, and such wonderful events, wherein it takes place; I offer these twelve *Inferences*.

Señ. 1. First we see here the eminent verification of this truth, *that unto the church are committed the oracles of God*, Rom. iii. 2. How so invaluable, and sacred a treasure that by no private conveyance, but by a public delivery was once put in her hand, is still under trust deposited there to be kept; and made use of unto the second coming of the Lord. I know this is a truth by few under debate or question, yet how few are there found to believe it, or so much in earnest as to bring it near their thoughts, how such a record is, and should this day be in the world, where as real an intercourse with heaven and the glorious God whose throne is there, is certainly to be had, as if with our eyes we should see some every hour come thence with their face shining, and written tables in their hand of the counsels of God to his people, now as here is a matter of the greatest concernment that ever was made known to men; in what a transport of joy should it put our soul to know we have no less clear and demonstrative evidence of its certainty by the verification of the Scripture, that *such are the very oracles of God*, which came down from himself, and does, 1. Stand open day and night for giving answers to the church, so as none needs fear to come at a wrong hour, or miss their errand when they come, if they indeed seek counsel there, that they may follow it. 2. Which shew forth things to come, and the great revolutions of the world, with their proper circumstances, when not the smallest appearance thereof from outward things could be judged. 3. Which have at all times a certain sound, and leaves none in the dark, with a doubtful response; but let

the world be what it will to the righteous, it sayeth, *Surely it shall be well with them*, Isa. iii. 10, 11. While it hath this audible voice to others, *There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked, nor shall it be well with them, though their days shall be prolonged in the earth*, Eccles. viii. 12. 4. These all may see, are the very oracles of God, which regard not the persons of men, but with an awful voice do speak to cities and kingdoms, and to the greatest monarchs there, to the judge on the bench, and the man of violence, when his oppression is backed with power, what none else dare tell. 5. Which gives answers contrary to human reason, and visible appearances, yet to this day did its sentence never fail, or deceive the man who trusted thereto. But when the suffrage of the Scripture, and of the world are in the most direct opposition to other, it doth not long want a visible decision, whose word shall stand. 6. These who enquire here, will find the way of the Lord so far laid open in the darkest times, that they may as evidently see the ~~sign~~ and demonstrative causes of the strange judgments that are falling out in the earth as the certainty of their accomplishment. 7. And are they not found to be *living oracles*, as Acts vii. 38. which do not convey light only, but heat and power to the soul. 8. It is no report but of undoubted experience, how clear a discovery is thence to a Christian, when no where else he could know his way, or understand these great depths: 1. The depths of Satan, which thus are found out, and made discernible for keeping at a distance therewith. 2. These depths of providence which are so marvellously unveiled, and opened up there when once a Christian gets near these oracles. 3. How thus also is there a further enlightening of the church, and in every time some opening up of the deep things of God in his word, which lay hid there from former ages.

Seeth 2. This clear discovery is here from our more full persuasion of the truth, what marvellous things have a present being and existence now before our eyes in the event, which many ages before they were brought forth, we know had a visible being in the Scripture, and there were revealed

and looked after by the church. This is a truth I must say, so great and convincing, and of that use to confirm the faith of the saints, and be a helper to their joy, that the ordinary impression must have thereof, shews how little it is either known or seriously considered. 1. That nothing is here conjectural, where a mistake can be from the events being afar off, and remote from our senses, but as we know they are written in the Bible, and there only have been revealed; it is as sure, they are visible realities in our sight this day, and for what thereof is not accomplished, it may be a further seal to the truth, when this is so clear, the time for their taking place is not yet come. 2. Can men open their eyes and not see the greatest prophecies of the Old Testament are at this day fulfilled, except they contradict their sense as well as reason; even such as the whole race of the *Jews* attest to be a part of the oracles of God committed to their forefathers, and by them owned, and delivered with a most severe circumspection to the least letter or tittle thereof from one age to another? 3. It is undeniable also, these events are such, that all the diviners of the world, by the stars or any probable conjunction of natural causes, could never reach, or have the least discovery of their rise, to bring them under their predictions; but any glance they have had was by a light borrowed from the Bible; so that the certainty thereof being clear, men cannot but see these are depths not only above the furthest reach of human understanding, but above the reach of fallen angels, or any depths of the bottomless pit to find out such things as the Scripture hath shewed; yea, let a search be made amongst the wise, and learned of this world, (for which I attest the greatest Atheists), if either *Aristotle* or *Plato*, or any since, who came to the greatest height of natural knowledge, in all their discoveries had ever the least thought or notion of such things as a new creation, of the power and efficacy of the gospel, or that there is a *Holy Ghost*, and what his witnessing, comforting, and teaching imports, which yet to the meanest of the saints, are as clear and certain, as that there is day and night.

Seet. 3. This may be clearly seen from the preceding demonstration, how the most wonderful works of God, and his greatest appearances in the earth are peculiarly directed to confirm and seal the truth of his word, which *he hath magnified above all his name*; and for this end, to give a being and visible performance to the Scripture, the most glorious actings of the Mediator under the New Testament are shewed forth, for which cause when he is going forth to war, in the greatness of his strength, with his vesture dipt in blood, he is known by that name, *The word of God*, Rev. xix. 13. These also are in every time obvious evictions of this truth; 1. How the most extraordinary steps in the way of the Lord, which are visibly above nature, and out of the road of second causes; yet go not without the bounds and limits of the Bible, but are such as to the conviction of all, may be easy to bring within sight of that blessed record, and a convincing seal and verification thereof. 2. It is clear also how these providences that are of the greatest extent, and have a further reach than any private use, or the personal experience of the saints, yea, are such whereby the whole church hath her public remarks, and *experimenta lucifera*, are for that end evidently direct, to shew the destiny and fate of flourishing cities and states, and of the greatest monarchs, is no casual thing, but the visible product of the Scripture, which there have been foretold. 4. This also may be clearly seen, how neither *Greece* nor *Rome*, whose conquests once were spread through most of the known world, did ever know such triumphs as the truth and faithfulness of God hath had over the thrones of kingdoms, as well as the meanest cottages, which as it makes the sea keep her bounds, so doth it restrain the rage of man, yea, brings down from their seat to an untimely grave such as have made the earth to tremble, and the nations shake in their day; while it may be no less marvellous in raising the poor from the dust, to witness, there is nothing wherein the LORD doth more conspicuously appear, and shew the greatness of his power, than in bringing his word to a performance.

Seet. 4. Is it not an undeniable and clear *Inference*, from what hath been held forth of these great events of the Scripture, that it is sure this day there is more at our hand, to be convincing and demonstrative of the truth, if we could advert thereto, than if *an immediate audible voice from heaven were given*. I know if once such an extraordinary sign from the Lord might be had, men would be ready to think, there needed no more to put them beyond all hesitation and debate; such is the ignorance of many, who know not what they possess and is already at their hand, when more is really given than men's heart could in this ask, as the Holy Ghost does expressly shew, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, if the sense of that Scripture were seriously pondered, *And this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount*; but to shew, that here is more than any such voice now given the church for her assurance of the truth, see ver. 19. *We have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which you do well to take heed*, &c. wherein is clearly held forth: 1. That something else than an ordinary regard to the Scripture is in this required, for a true persuasion of its truth, there is a *taking heed*, *παραίχεσθαι*, which imports a singular attention where the soul followeth the eye as in an intense motion. 2. That thus is there another sight to be had of the written word, and of these wonderful things there, which through *not taking heed* most pass by, and do not discern. 3. It is most clear, how such an advertence and *taking heed* to the Scripture is understood here, with some peculiar respect thereto, as it is a *more sure word of prophecy*; how it takes place, and hath such demonstrative evidences of the certainty of its truth in the event; for thus doth the apostle oppose it to so extraordinary a sign from heaven. 4. It cannot be possibly supposed, that the word as it is written should be *more sure*, as to an objective certainty, than his speaking to men by an audible voice, since both are his own word. But by such a preference as is here held forth, there is this clearly witnessed, that in the way of the written word more is really given to the church if it were rightly understood, and that we could but advert

thereto, for begetting a further subjective certainty within the soul, than either miracles or any extraordinary sign from heaven could do. Now to evince this, how great a light thus may be had, and should break up by *taking heed* to the word, as it is a *more sure word of prophecy*, I offer these, 1. Is it not clear, from so wonderful a product of the Scripture, above nature or natural causes, and these great appearances of God there which are so near, even to our touch and feeling; how convincingly they bring a greater demonstration of the truth to men's eyes, than so extraordinary a voice could bring to their ears. 2. It is sure, such a discovery is in this day to be had of the written word, that in a more discernible way than by any outward voice or sound may be known by power and life, yea, by that ineffable evidence and light, with so near and feeling a converse with the invisible God, as there is found and experienced by every one of the saints, that can make it no less discernible from the word of man, than if we heard it by some audible and articulate voice spoken out of heaven. 3. What *Jacob* saw but in a vision, may we not here see with our eyes, by such a *taking heed*; *a ladder set betwixt heaven and earth*, by which the glorious GOD his coming down to converse with the church and the souls of his people, is by as near an approach witnessed in the written word, as if he should come with such a stupendous extraordinary voice: so that as the top of this ladder, in its descent, and original is seen to reach to heaven; it is sure, nothing can be more visible, than how its foot also toucheth the earth, and thus its other end is on the ground, to the sense and feeling of the weakest Christian, in their experience of the truth. 4. By *taking heed* to the Scripture is not such an evidence and attestation to be had of its truth, from a continued *series* of events, and the known certainty thereof, that for our being sure, and thoroughly confirmed, doth far exceed any transient irradiation of the mind, which so strange a voice and sound from heaven could cause? 5. To shew the preference of the word to all extraordinary means, we see it is the very last way and mean now for revealing the counsel of God to the church; yea,

how it is suited to these times, when the greatest light and most clear opening up of the truth is expressly promised, and to be looked after as that which hath the advantage every way of more extraordinary signs, whereby in former times the counsels of God were revealed. O if men knew, or would but let themselves know what here might be reached by such a serious enquiry, and *taking heed* to the Scripture, how easy were it to see that something much greater than an audible voice from heaven is this day at their hand, to assure them of its truth.

Sect. 5. Here we may clearly see such a reality and substance in the supernatural truths of the word, that whoever will, they may come and *feel after God there*, and with the greatest certainty of sense be conducted to the things themselves which most within the church know but in the *theory* and notion. This is indeed a convincing evidence, and such as nothing possibly can be beyond it; if we consider, 1. How the object here is not at a distance, but in its approach so near, as any thing can be, which is found and touched in men's hands, where they know it is no mistake, but in the greatest composure of spirit, have a present and rational reflection on their own experience. 2. Such as they are sure it can be no casual thing, nor is it a groping in the dark; but thus every step in the road of sense and feeling is by rule and method, which hath Scripture-light shining before it, so that they know by experience, this is nothing else but what they were called to believe, and could have read in the Bible before they know any such thing: for thus are the written word and the experience of the saints, found such relatives, and the tie betwixt them so discernible, as in the most obvious connection that possibly could be in nature, betwixt the cause and the effect, or the fountain and the stream. 3. What here is felt, and proved to be in the way of the word we see also is the repeated experience of others, even of the whole race of the saints, who in that good and old way of converse with God, and following him, did in all ages bear the same witness. 4. That this *feeling* is an undoubted

reality, is so clear, that these now know it who could not believe the truth of such a thing, and did no less look thereon as a dream, than most of this generation do, until the truth once touched them at the heart. 5. And is it not such a *feeling* that there can be no more sure converse by the senses with this visible world, than that the saints have with these great things revealed in the Bible, when they cannot but witness what they have both seen and known?

SECT. 6. Thus is it clear from the foregoing demonstration, how great an *assistance sense offers to the Christian's faith*, and what solid improvements, might be made this way, for a more thorough reliance on the security of the word and promise, when so much is given, that men may see as well as believe. For which some things would be previously considered, how this is to be understood, and what a certainty is here, that we are not grasping at a shadow, in a matter of such weight and near concernment to us. 1. It is sure, there are spiritual things, and great supernatural truths of the written word to be known by sight as well as by faith, whilst we are here; nor is there any of the saints but can as firmly abide by their spiritual sense, and the reality thereof, as by that which is natural; that the one is no less undoubtedly certain than the other. 2. We clearly see, how the Lord himself makes an appeal to the sense and experience of his people, Isa. xl. 28. *Hast thou not heard? hast thou not known?* and that such a trial is called for, to taste and see if he be not what his word declares him to be, Psal. liv. 8. where he hath so far condescended, that none needs take his word on trust from men, but their own eyes may see it. 3. Though it is clear, that so much is witnessed to our reason, that no natural science, no proposition in *Euclid* can have such firm and sure demonstrations as the truth of the written word; yet is it not too obvious, what hesitation and dark apprehensions are about this, if some other sight and feeling than what by nature or natural reason can be had, be not in earnest sought after. 4. I confess it is one of the excellencies of faith to believe and not see; yea, these are most blessed, for here we must

walk by faith, and not by sight, which is the very first and last work of a Christian. But I fear a sad mistake many are in of the right sense of this, as if to believe were some dark and uncomfortable thing, and that the less men see before them, it were so far a higher act of their faith, since this only can be understood, *quoad evidentiam rei, sed non quoad evidentiam testimonii*; that when no appearances are of the things promised, or how such should be, then to credit the word for all, is a giving glory to God, and one of the choicest acts of faith within time: but for what concerns the evidence and certainty of the word, and our security therein, I must say, it is some higher degree Christians are called to seek and look after, that their walking this way may be by sight, than seems to be either thought of, or believed by most within the church; yea such an evidence thereof, that might be truly *physical*, and as infallibly sure, as men can have of the being of the sun, when they see it with their own eyes. 5. Is it not undeniable, that according to the degree of evidence, so doth the soul adventure on the truth, so doth it embrace it as good, yea thus only can it have a sweet repose and comfort by a fiducial recumbence thereon? And on this account is it not clear, how it is the want of *sense* that makes so great a want of faith amongst the saints?

Having premised these things for giving some light to this truth, and to prevent mistake, I shall but in a few words more touch it, since what hath been held forth in the preceding chapters, bear the same witness, how great a discovery is thus of the truth, and certainty of the written word, and what marvellous advantage is at our hand to believe, if we could see it aright. But for a further clearing I offer here these solid improvements of *sense*, that may be convincingly obvious to every discerning Christian. 1. How such hath his experience of the word which he knows well, and hath been so oft repeated, that as a lighted torch does go before him in every new act of his faith, for what is to come, and lets him see it is no dark or untrodden path, nor is it a fixing on some doubtful and abstract notion; but that assuredly he is on safe

and known ground here, yea such that as he *knows whom here he hath believed*, and is sure it is the same word, and the very same sealed truth and security which he hath often trusted, and had it made good. O what might be found here, to make a Christian's way pleasant und easy, if the solid improvement of this were but understood. 2. Is there not such an assistance *sense* affords for believing, that it can shew how great a part of the Bible is already put in the Christian's hand by present possession: yea thus points him to the very particular truths, where the day-star hath been made to arise within his heart, with so sensible a breaking up of light, and comfort, and strength amidst his saddest hours, as hath oft put him to set a mark thereon, like *Jacob's* erecting his pillar, how there the comforter and his soul did meet, when no meeting could have been more seasonable. 3. It is not the object of our faith only, but we know by sight how visible an impress of the written word is on the serious and tender walk of the saints; that as the one is so convincing, so is the other also; yea thus how many impressions thereof are in every age seen to be cast off I am sure to the conviction of the world. 4. And is it not by *sense* we know the undoubted certainty of these truths, which are the greatest contradiction to our outward senses; how there is a rejoicing in tribulation, a real abounding under wants, a being strong when we are weak; yea, that an unspeakable comfort can be really had out of the greatest depths of a Christian's trouble. 5. We know also by sense, that as every living thing hath food suited to its kind, such a substance is in the Scripture, and a natural suiting of the truths there, to feed, nourish, and strengthen a spiritual life, with as great a fitness, as our daily bread can be to that which is natural. 6. It is the undoubted witness of sense; that there is a power in godliness, as well as the form, and such an evidence, and *demonstration of the spirit*, with the word, that its sound can be no more sure and discernible to the ear, than it is to the soul of a Christian. 7. Except we quit our sight, as well as reason, we must see such a vital scent and air there is with serious godliness, as no false shew

could ever counterfeit, no more than art can make a dead picture breathe and stir; yea, that the product of the gospel, and these great effects it hath in the world are indeed above nature, and such as no human power, or moral influence could possibly reach. 8. It is not only from the Bible, but with the greatest certainty of *sense*, that the saints know, there is an immediate presence of the comforter, acceptance and access in prayer, the spirit's making intercession in them with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered, yea, such an immediate relief and comfort to the soul so sensibly found there, that makes their very bones to bless him, and say, *who is like unto thee O LORD*. 9. Is it not made obvious to our *sense*, that when once men are engaged in the way of the Lord, they have got some new acquaintance, and some other society than men to converse with; yea, what a marvellous change grace then makes on them, from what they were, to assure us of that change glory will ere long make on them, from what they now are? 10. Can there be any thing more evident, than this to our *sense*, that where grace is in a vigorous exercise in any, it gives another appearance than once they had, yea, then it doth shine with such a lustre, as will darken all about them? I shall but further add, what may be as evident to sense as that there is light and darkness, that in-bred contrariety which is in most of men against holiness, and how thus there are two contrary states here, to witness the certainty of these contrary states of heaven and hell in another world.

Seet. 7. Thus we may see, that to these who believe is *the exceeding greatness of the power of God, and his mighty working, most eminently shewed forth*; yea, in the way of the word, and its continued verification, more than in any extraordinary path. This is the testimony of the Holy Ghost, Eph. i. 19. which though strange and amazing, yet nothing more sure, that there is none of the saints who is exercised unto godliness, but may know the truth of undeniable miracles, and a real converse therewith, within his soul, if a more serious reflection were on his own experience, how immediately from

heaven these are wrought. I confess it may seem to bring it under debate, if this can be a truth, or if it be really believed, when it doth not cause a more frequent transport of joy, and wondering among Christians, thus to know such near and sensible communications betwixt God and their soul, by the Scripture; and that it is found from him, which under their saddest pressures makes their work easy, both in them and about them; yea, how the greatest effects of a supernatural and divine power that ever was shewed to men, such as to raise the dead, open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth a creation out of nothing, are surely acted over in the heart of each of the saints, though spiritually, yet in as great a reality there, and with no less demonstrative evidence of GOD'S immediate power, as there can be of these extraordinary miracles which were once shewed forth to the view and conviction of the world.

Sect. 8. We see this truth, and how clearly it is witnessed from what hath been held forth, *That the confirmations of the last times are greater than those of the first*, and 'tis more easy now to believe, and be persuaded of the certainty of the Scripture, than in the days when such extraordinary signs and appearances of God were held forth to his church. I know this will seem strange, and by some be questioned how it can be a truth, that there should be now more advantage to believe the word, and we accountable for the improvement of a larger seal and witness thereto, than in the days of the apostles and primitive church, before whom such undeniable miracles were wrought. But let us also consider, 1. What great things of the Scripture have this day taken place, and are disclosed in the event, which then were hid from their eyes; and as we have that advantage of all which from the Lord was brought to confirm his truth in these times, and may recur thereupon, with the same certainty as if we had seen them: O what a marvellous seal hath been since added, which former times did not know. 2. As it is sure none can deny a greater light hath now broken up to the church, than what was in former ages, and since the first times of the

gospel That there hath been a continued finishing of the mystery of God in the Scripture, the performance whereof is the great intent of providence; so is it also clear what a further revealing and bringing to light hath been therewith of his deep counsels there, which is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. 3. Is it not now manifest, the time of that promise Dan. xii. 4. is come, for some greater discoveries of these truths which then were sealed up, when they shall not run in vain who are on this blessed scent, to know what the word is bringing forth for the church; yea, that it is such a day when some great Scripture truths are near the height and full period of their accomplishment, and therewith a more remarkable piece of the work of God than former ages have known; for which, whatever present darkness, now we have sure ground to believe that the *brightness of the second coming of the LORD*, 2 Thes. ii. 8. by which the man of sin shall be utterly abolished, is in some measure begun, and so much thereof seen as may be an earnest in our hand of what we believe and wait for before the end. 4. Such an advantage is this day beyond the best of former ages, that we may see what length the course of the gospel, and of the church-militant, is now come; and how far the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, which if it were not thus verified in the event, how hard should it be to believe a truth so contrary to all human appearances.

SECT. 9. Thus it doth manifestly appear from the foregoing demonstration, that these *are not more wonderful truths we are now called to believe*, which seem at a distance so strange and astonishing; *than such we certainly know, and have seen with our eyes accomplished*; nor are the objects of our faith, that the Scripture is yet to bring forth, more great, and above nature's understanding, than these which are the objects of sense, and thus before us in the event; if we could seriously consider, 1. What concerns the Jewish restoration; a truth that seems so hard for many to believe how this should take place, for that dead womb yet to bear, and these dry bones live which for so many days have lain at the grave's

mouth, is indeed a marvellous thing! But what do we see? and is accomplished about that people? Is it not also demonstrative of God, and of his marvellous power in the way of judgment as this is of the sovereignty of his grace? I mean, that continued stroke of judicial blindness and obduration they are now under, amidst such clear evidences of the truth, which none possibly could resist, if that veil were not over their mind, the apostle speaks of, and their reason and understanding under a visible restraint; so that if these be considered what now hath taken place, and we are yet called to believe, is it not most clear, the one is not more strange and astonishing than the other. 2. We believe a pouring out of the last plague upon Antichrist, which shall overturn his seat and kingdom; for this is expressly foretold; But is it not evident, that nothing here is more strange, and above human appearances, than what this day is certainly seen of the truth of the Scripture, in his revealing the manner of his appearance, that height of his power and prevalence over the saints, yea, what is already begun and fulfilled of his downfall; which are truths that I may say once seemed no less amazing to the church at a distance, than the utter abolishing of that adversary, looks to us this day. 3. It is a special part of our faith for things yet to come, that ere long there will be a parting with time, and then shall we enter into an estate of everlasting blessedness, which is a great truth; yea so great, that it may be strange how easy some can find the believing of such a thing from joy and wondering thereat; but what do we see, and have brought near our senses to confirm the Scripture? Is it not something no less wonderful, that by the power of the gospel so many are entered out of darkness into a marvellous light, which is really another world; yea, such an estate that riseth higher above the condition of men by nature, than that glorious condition of the saints in heaven is now above theirs, who are yet journeying towards it; for the difference of the one is but in degree, but the other in kind. 4. We believe this day the resurrection of the dead, and an undoubted accomplishment of that great truth,

which to natural reason would seem a strange contradiction; but would we not consider, that the same truth, though in a spiritual way, yet most visibly and upon an higher account is verified before our eyes; how it is sure, such are quickened and brought to life, who were dead in their sins, were past feeling, yea, for so many years have lain as in a cold grave, without sense of God or their own case, who in one moment, at the voice of the word, have been made to stir and arise; and is not this something as discernible above nature, or the influences of second causes, yea, as marvellous an act of divine power, as the resurrection of the body in the last day, which seems so dark and strange a thing for many to believe.

5. We wait also according to the promise for the second coming of the Lord, that this last piece of canonic Scripture shall assuredly be disclosed in the event, when the Lord himself will descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, before whom these visible heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up; for these are things which must shortly come to pass: but it is sure, nothing in all this is so marvellous or great, as what hath come to pass, when we now know, that God was manifested in the flesh, which is so marvellous a performance of the Scripture, that after this men's hearts can have no shadow for fear, or distrust of the bringing forth of all that remains, there being this day so much in our hand, that we know the greatest truth in all the Bible hath already taken place.

Seet. 10. Thus is that marvellous discovery made clear before us, how great a thing the Scripture is, *whose words are seen to be works*, and not the notion or *idea* of things only, but such as have a real being and substance; yea, such that their speaking and doing is truly one and the same: if we could consider, 1. How these are words to be felt by the soul, and is truly suited thereto, as for our eyes to read them; which have not only a sound to the ear, but are sweet to the taste, yea, such as each of the saints from experience can say, *thy words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the rejoicing*

of my heart, Jer. xv. 16. 2. We must say, no words like these were ever written since the beginning of time, which can take life and root in the soul, yea, does it as really as the seed doth in the ground, and are fitted to be ingrafted and innaturalised there, so as no coalition in nature, betwixt the graft and the tree, can be more real than this, Jam. i. 21. 3. These are words where the thing promised, though hoped for, and to come, have even then a present being and subsistence in the promise, Heb. xi. 1. yea, such are they, that it can be truly said, if a Christian have the promise, he hath the mercy. 4. We know they are such that can at once both speak the Christian's peace, comfort, and strength to them, and convey it, yea, in that very moment effectuate what they say. 5. Is it not clear also, they are not more visibly written in the Bible, than they are sealed upon the soul of a Christian, and what may seem most wonderful there of the workings, breathings, strengthenings, teachings, and witnessing of the Spirit, are found to be so many undoubted realities turned over again in a practical history. Oh! what a book is this; which men if they shut not their eyes, might see the living God only could frame; where two impressions are oft made discernible at once, the one of words and syllables by the Printer's types upon paper, but the other of life and power by the Holy Ghost, by whom these are made living words, so that the truth of grace, the breathings of God on his people, his felt presence, and that near fellowship they are admitted to with him, may be seen to be nothing else but some part of this second impression of the Bible.

Set. 11. Such are the wonderful works of God, wherein the Scripture is verified before us, as clearly shews, *his name is near*, and how sensible an approach there is this day of it to the church, Psal. lxxv. 1. How this is to be understood, some things would be previously considered, 1. That it is a truth verified to all, since there can be no possible distance from him who fills heaven and earth with his presence, such is the immensity of his essence. 2. He is near in a more special way oft to his people, when they are not aware, and

can discern no evidences thereof, Job. ix. 11, *he goeth by me and I see him not.* 3. It is known also, such solemn and sensible approaches of God there are, which no words can express; yea, hath been in that manner witnessed to some, yea, that it might be judged not fit to communicate to others, it should seem so strange what they have certainly known of this. 4. It is clear, the most demonstrative evidence of such a truth, is in these great events of the Scripture, and that there is it the holy God causeth his name and attributes pass before men's eyes with so visible a discovery of himself as is suited to awake the sleeping world, and call them up to an awful regard of his being so near. But Oh how little serious advertence is to this, and to these immediate appearances of the Lord in verifying his truth, a sight from which most of this generation do flee; yea, how much is lost even by the saints of these choice confirmations they might have thereof, through their not being more in an habitual frame to observe; but to evince the certainty of this blessed truth, and how near his name is by a most sensible demonstration to the experience of the saints in all ages; These sure and known remarks I shall instance, 1. How it hath not been more discernible his speaking to them in the promise, than that himself also hath done it, and hath given the performance in their hand of that very word whereupon he had caused them to hope, Psal. cxix. 49. yea, thus so near an approach of his name, that as they knew a sensible and strengthening influence on their hope to hold by the word, when no appearances were of its taking place; now they see and are sure of the return with that convincing discovery, *This is our God, we have awaited for him*, Isa. xxvi. 8. 2. It is clear, there is none of the saints but in some measure know what it is to have their *Bethel*, where with *Jacob* they could say, *surely God was there*; and have found that upon so near an approach as hath made both the time and place remarkable through all their life, Hos. xii. 4. 3. It is known also these providences do occur where an extraordinary appearance of God, and of some visible appointments from heaven, like to *Hagar's*

well in the wilderness, hath been so clearly witnessed, as hath caused a present fear as well as joy to some of the saints; and with *Abraham's* servant to bow down and worship with wondering at so near an approach of his name, Gen. xxvi. 26.

4. It is sure, there are palpable answers to prayer, the saints have from heaven, to witness *his name is near*, which then brings a certainty and evidence therewith, of their being accepted, their suit taken in, a loosing of their bonds; yea, thus a communication of some divine thing to quiet the soul, which no words can possibly tell, what they have both seen and felt of so near an approach; *but surely God hath heard me*, saith *David*, Psal. v. Is not his being near then witnessed, when he openeth men's ears to discipline, and sealeth their instruction, that such a power and authority is found with their light, as forceth its passage down to the reins, and the hidden parts, to make them go bound in the spirit about their duty, and to hear that voice behind them, which saith, *This is the way, walk in it*, Job. xxxiii. Isa. xxx. 21. I shall but add, that nothing can be more known, than that sensible retreat the saints do find into this name, when from outward pressures their soul hath been ready to sink, when thus it is set open to take these in, on whom all passages of relief from without have been remarkably shut; yea, thence such a light found to break up with that immediate conveyance of strength and support, that can only be understood by these that feel it, Psal. ix.

SecT. 12. We have solid warrant for this, that so great a light doth result from the accomplishment of the Scripture, and these events wherein it takes place, as puts the *Angels in heaven* this day to the same study with us, to know by the church the *manifold wisdom of God*, and what marvellous providences are thus witnessed to his people; so that upon this account we know these excellent spirits who in that state of perfection behold the face of God; even these are at school with the saints here, to see and admire his works and various dispensations about the church, where his faithfulness and truth do so brightly shine forth, Eph. iii. 10. For it is clear, 1.

Such are the depths of providence, and the unfealing of the written word, which is the work of the Mediator alone, and under his hand, as goeth beyond the wisdom of angels, which they see and regard with wondering, but cannot comprehend, 1 Pet. i. 12. 2. It is sure, these have a more clear sight, and with another kind of joy and delight look in on such events of the Scripture that concern the church, than can be by any here reached in the state of mortality: and thus have they a knowledge by experience and observation of the great works of God in the world. 3. Though such are in a glorified state, yet are they called to learn and have some new accession to their joy and knowledge, and which may be truly said, some further proficiencie by this marvellous study of the continued verification of the word, how the counsel of the Lord takes place; yea, what a rare choice of means is to be seen for that end, how the contrivances of Satan, and all the church's enemies are so directed, as to bring forth the contrary effects; and the temptations, straits and down-castings of the saints, made the very way and method for their further raising: Thus also they see how marvellous a consent there is betwixt that infallible certainty of events from the determination of the Lord, and the liberty of second causes; and how small and contemptible means are made most subservient for some of his greatest works. 4. It may be clear from the word what special access these great ministers of providence, the angels, have for this blessed study, to see and observe the wisdom, power, and faithfulness of GOD, in their continued executing his commands, and doing of his will upon the earth; when 1. With a further light than can be known to us here, they do look in upon the whole conduct of human affairs, and event of things in the world (in which their service is more than we are aware of,) and there see how all is ordered in subserviency to the Scripture, and its taking place. 2. These do in a special manner regard the assemblies of the church, and the great appearance of God there, as is clear 1 Cor. xi. 10. but how little of this is known or believed, that so near approaches thus are of the angels, and

their being present at the meetings of the saints, where the ordinances of Christ are truly dispensed. 3. Such a continued converse have these glorious spirits with the saints, in their care and oversight of them, that it may be truly said, they are not only helpers, but joint-observers with such, of the truth and tenderness of God, in the whole tract and conduct of providence about them. It is sure the ministry of the angels does in no times cease: and though it be not so clear from the Scripture, a proper deputation of some of these for each particular Christian; yet what joy and astonishing thoughts should it cause, to consider that it is so evident; these have a distinct charge and commission for every one of the heirs of salvation, to prevent such imminent hazards, when they are not aware thereof themselves, and see to their bodies as well as their souls; to go before them in such undertakings as are in the way of the promise, for making them successful; to rescue where ordinary means fail; yea to *hold them up as in their hands, that they dash not their feet against a stone?* Now in all these as it is clear how marvelously they concur and are at work with delight; so have they some further knowledge this way, by observing the unspotted faithfulness of God towards his people, yea thus are made partakers of their joy.

SECT. 13. This one inference more I must add from the preceding demonstration, how convincing and clear a witness there is to this great truth, of a *real energy* and *efficacious working* of the Spirit with the Word, beyond any moral influence, or objective teaching thereof; *and of principles of grace immediately infused in the soul of a Christian*, whence such are put forth to these acts and duties, that no improvement of natural abilities could ever reach. This is a truth of greatest weight, which we see here so clearly evinced and proved, that I may say nothing possibly can be more to insure the being and certainty of a thing than this; the *Scripture of God*, and *experience of the saints*, that in all ages they have had of its verification, do in one witness most convincingly meet; for such evidence from the Scripture there is, as all may see an essay to

expunge these blessed truths out of it, must have the same reach to bring the whole in question, they lie so close with its most substantial parts, and run as it were through all the veins and arteries of that blessed record. And for the certainty of *experience*, with these discoveries on the soul of a Christian thereof, in that manner they are known, as may make it no less strange to hear these brought in debate, than for a living man to be questioned about the truth of vital principles, without which he could neither act nor move. I am pressed to touch this, not only as it falls in on the road with the present subject of this discourse, and that from so necessary a rise I could not now pass it; but in a time also, when such essays are, as have gone a further length than to oppose the power and spirituallity of religion in the practice; to attack it in its principles, and run down the notion thereof, as some imposture or fanatic dream, with which they persuade us, the world hath been until this day cheated; yea, with a confidence as may shew what an hour it is on the reformed church, when such come publicly forth, as dare offer to affront the God of truth, in the most clear discoveries of his word, by giving them the lie, and the Spirit of grace in his eminent workings on the soul; yea, to scoff at all sensible intercourse betwixt Jesus Christ and his church here upon the earth, in his manifestations and withdrawals, as the fumes of religious madness, or some ebbs and tides of the humours of the body. I confess, when at this rate they speak, none needs wonder at personal reflections, as with a strange height of insolence they shew in reviling some, whose repute and honour in the church for the truth's sake is above their power to darken. But what a time are we in, when Atheism so far out-goes its usual bounds, that it is not enough to get it from the heart to the tongue; but it must be down at the pen, to deride the truth of godliness before others; some serious thoughts of which, could not be without a terror and awful impression on their hearts when alone with themselves; and now must it not only be the song of the drunkards, but a matter of public scoffing and sport by

such who have the name of *doctors* within the church? It hath put me to a stand with astonishment, to think what they possibly can intend in their venting such doctrines, which all may see is not to dispute, but to droll the world out of any settled persuasion of the truth, and to persuade men to trust their own eyes no more for what they read in the Bible, nor their experience for what is most certainly felt and proved on their soul; but conform, in the matter of religion, to the mode and fashion of the times, as well as in their clothes: and to enforce this, some new and more effectual way must be taken, which I confess is such as former ages have but little known, to dictate Atheism and blasphemy by rule, and bring them within the road of divinity, and the doctrine of the church. One thing in this looks to me with the greatest terror, that sad account which this gives of the temper and complexion of the time; when it seems to be consulted as the way to gain repute for parts, and being masters of reason, to decry the power and life of religion; yea, in that manner, as if their alone interest in owning the name of Christians, were to have some more advantage for casting reproach on Christianity, and to weaken its awe on men's souls; but it is well their design lies not in the dark, nor is the bait such as can cover the hook from the most ordinary observers, and though they bring another gospel than what is delivered to us in the Scripture, which too manifestly may be evinced, yet is it under no such appearance as angels from heaven. What I speak here is far from the least intended irritation or prejudice at the persons of any, against whom I know no interest or quarrel but one, which is for the truth's sake, and that blessed name by the which we are called; having so enforcing a call to this, in pursuance of the present subject I now treat on from a doctrine stated in such direct opposition thereto, and at this day thus publicly owned; which is this, "That Religion is nothing else but what lies in moral virtue, and a living up to the dictates of nature's light; yea, no truth in the influences and efficacy of the Spirit on men's souls beyond the objective teaching of

“ the word, nor no inward principles of grace, a new birth, “ or any reality of a spiritual life, but what are the illusions of “ men’s fancy:” a doctrine were it now owned, and put in the church’s creed, we might truly say with the apostle, *then is the Christian faith in vain*, and hath been so in the most fundamental articles thereof; since there was a church in the world; yea, then have all the saints since the beginning of time been *false witnesses against God*. I shall touch this but in a few words, since others more largely, and with much advantage to the truth, have appeared therein; these particulars I only offer to be considered: How express and undeniable an opposition is here, 1. To the written Word. 2. To the experience of the saints in all ages of the church. 3. To such clear demonstrative grounds of reason, as might enforce a conviction on the greatest Atheists, though the Scripture were laid aside. 4. How visible the tendency of this doctrine is, to strike at the root and vital parts of Christianity, which all may see by undeniable consequence from it. 5. How obvious is it also that such must oppose their own light and conscience, in that reproach they cast on the truth, and these whom at so high a rate they challenge of enthusiasm and imposture, when the contrary is so known, that they can have no possible advantage for it, but by making lies their refuge.

For the first: Since it is clear, no other scheme or mould of religion we can own, but from the Scriptures of God; let us but go in there and see what this is, and how express an opposition it stands in to such doctrine as is now publicly vented; which, as the scales of the balance, are such, that the one cannot possibly rise, but with the going down of the other; when so plain and full the Scripture’s witness is herein. 1. That it is an evangelic holiness and no legal that is now required under the dispensation of the gospel; and not a conformity only to the will of God in his law, but also to the image of God in his Son; a holiness that from him as the principle must be derived, and unto him as the pattern can only be conformed, Rom. viii. 29. *Having predestinated*

us to be conformable to the image of his Son, nor is the writing of the law in our heart to be understood, but as it is a *conformity to that law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus*. This is the alone test, and no other we can know of Christian morality, which if men shew not that stamp and superscription thereon, let their pretences be never so high, it is a counterfeit, and cast into a false mould, when brought to the Scripture, and before its light to be tried. and what a strange shape should these put upon holiness, to divide it from its alone fountain Jesus Christ, and the righteousness of the gospel, without which it cannot possibly stand. the corruption of the most excellent things is found to be most noisome; and I am sure no contrivance could be beyond this, to turn so rare an antidote into poison; yea for what use should the gospel be more, if religion must all be summed up in a practice of moral virtue, and living up to the dictates of reason, according to the light of nature, as we see now openly professed. 2. The Scripture expressly shews, that the Lord looks to men's actions in their principles whence they flow, and does accordingly judge thereof; and the *tree must be good*, else the fruit will be as the apples of Sodom, for a *corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit*, Mat. vii. 18. nor can these *who are in the flesh please God*, Rom. viii. 8. And what is more clear than the Scripture is here, that there are principles of grace formed in the soul of a Christian; an *ingrafting of the word* into the soul, James i. 21. and a *real transforming into the same image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. a *being made partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. Yea, is there not a writing of the law in the inward man, whence there is a spiritual enlightening of the understanding, and effectually determining of the will unto objects spiritual, and supernaturally good? and if men will deny the truth of regeneration, and a new life formed in the soul; yet can they deny, that these are the words of our great Master himself, *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven*, and that it is written, John iii. 3? Or debate there is such a Scripture, 1 John iii. 9. that shews a *being born of God*, and how these have *his seed remaining in them*; in

which a change no less marvellous is thus wrought than if a transmutation should be of one nature and kind into another. Why do not some prefix to their books, what they so visibly import, a refutation of the written word, when their peculiar aim is to impugn its truth, and turn the great institutions of the gospel into a cheat and imposture of fanatics. 3. Is not this the doctrine of the Scripture, that *there is an evidence and demonstration of the Spirit* with the preached gospel, 1 Cor. ii. 4. by which the same truths that are taught by men, are impressed and made effectual on the soul; and that *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*? yea is not a most dreadful account given of such by the Holy Ghost, and expressly foretold, 2 Tim. iii. 4. who having the *form of godliness*, should deny the *power thereof*; whatever length such a form may come in the material part of duties, and how plain a verification is of this, the world may see this day. 4. If men but read the Scripture, can they debate what of this truth is so clear there, that there is an in-being and union with Jesus Christ, John xvi. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 1. as the hid spring of all a Christian's supplies, the principle of their spiritual enjoyments, without which men's furthest endeavours after holiness cannot possibly reach that end; since from him must *our fruit be found*, Hos. xiv. 8. and how he is unto his people, not their *righteousness* only, but *sanctification*, 1 Cor. xi. 4. yea how straitly are these conjoined, a meritorious cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, and that effectual cleansing from it by the Spirit, Tit. iii. 5? 5. This does the Scripture also clearly witness, that there is another key to open men's heart, than moral suasion; nor can men's *planting and watering* in the use of means do further, than there is a divine concurrence therewith to give the increase, 1 Cor. iii. 6. and how a physical and moral influence do both answer to produce one and the same effect, Phil. ii. 8: a revealing of *Christ in us* by the Spirit, as well as an objective revelation of him is to us in the gospel; yea, how no constraint is put on the saints, but what takes the true liberty of the soul in its consent with it, it being a *constraint of love*, 2 Cor. v. 14. Cant. i. 4. 6. Is it

not thus clear, that the same authority which hath given a rule for all moral duties in the decalogue, hath commanded also the manner of their performance; and that no right worshipping of God can be, but in spirit and truth; yea, that such a reduplication should be in the act and doing of duty, to do it for the Lord, to give to a disciple as a disciple; and so labour, *That whether absent or present we may be accepted of him*; this also is shewed Psal. li. 6. that it is *truth in the inward parts* he especially regards; and was it not something else than the moral rectitude of an act, or its conformity on the matter to the rule which gave the widow's mite such a preference, made that difference betwixt Cain and Abel's offering? I shall but add this; If the quality of the principle were not morally essential to an action, then Judas's sorrow might have been true repentance, which was so intense and real a grief.

2. As the express opposition of such doctrine to the Scripture is undeniable; how manifest a contradiction is here also to the experience of the saints in all ages of the church, who in these great truths have put to their seal, *That God is true*; wherein such fear not to make him a liar. I need use but few words in speaking to this which at such length is held forth elsewhere: and where, I must say, none can seriously exercise reason, but sees no possible fallacy or imposture can be here; but if men must try their wit to undeceive the world from such a cheat as some pretend this to be, and deny its truth because they are strangers to it themselves; they will not think it strange that we cannot quit the Scripture, nor at once deliver up our reason and judgment; yea, cannot so far contradict both sense and feeling, as to come over to their way: nor need such wonder, it is not easy to unteach the doctrine and substantial of Christianity, to these who know its truth upon their soul; or persuade a living man that life and motion is but an illusion of his fancy: for with no less certainty do the saints know these truths, which now are so publicly disowned. 1. That a real intercourse betwixt Jesus Christ and the soul is no ima-

ginary thing, but such as thy know to surpass all the delights men seek or can suppose in a wallowing in sensuality; and, that then they are in no dream, but awake, and in the greatest composure of mind, when under his shadow they have sat, and his fruit was sweet to their taste, when his name as ointment was poured forth, and their heart made to melt within at their beloved's voice; yea, when with the church he hath taken them in unto more special retirements with himself, and there hath given them his love, Cant. vii. 9. when his sensible embracements under some bitter afflicting crosses, hath been such as hath made them forget the smart and pain thereof. Oh where do we live? Is it in a Christian church? thus to hear that inestimable love of Jesus Christ, and these blessed communications thereof to his people, brought by some to the pulpit, and others to the press, as a matter of public scoffing and derision? Can it be said in the house of his friends, such indignity is offered unto him? but though these sport at such an appeal as they pretend some have made unto the tribunal of God, it is like their confidence may fail to hold up at this rate, when it comes but near the drawing of their last breath; or to put such religion in their testament, which they fear not to put in their books.

2. This assurance have all who know the truth, (oppose it who will) to own as a matter of experience, yea, with that certainty, as they know the truth of any thing; That there is a real and sensible intercourse here betwixt the word and the soul, by communications of life, strength, joy, and light; and how this is no product of enthusiastic fumes, but as they are a manifest seal and verification of the Scripture, so is the reality thereof as sure; yea, how marvellous an up-breaking of light is oft found this way, to discover the wondrous things of the word, which at other times are hid, and no more within their power, than to cause the sun to shine when it is under a dark cloud.

3. It is the witness of the saints, which from sure experience they know and give in to the truth and being of a spiritual life, as that which no less sensibly is demonstrate, than that men have life and being by na-

ture; which though it is not by birth, nor hath a rise from natural causes, yet hath its vital acts and proper operation as really put forth, as the acts of breathing and moving are by a living man; a life that hath peculiar delights and enjoyments suited to its own nature, such as have not the least affinity with the flesh; yea, a life with as real communications and influences both of light and strength from above, as it is sure our bodies are influenced with the warmings of the sun. Some may take the confidence to deride this (as now this way seems an advantage in such an age,) when a profane drollery gains more than the most solid demonstrations of truth; and no such effectual mean consulted, as that to gain repute: but I may with some more confidence say, if these knew what is the Christian's evidence of the reality of such a truth, and what they live and feed on, and truly enjoy, where the world can be no witness; this mirth should cease, and debate about the solidity of religion, or scoff at those who are most in earnest about it. 4. It will be too hard a work for men, to dispute a Christian out of these sensible tastes of acceptance and peace with God, the joy of his presence, and their being empowered to approach unto him, with the liberty of the Spirit of adoption, who at other times know the sad restraints and bondage their backslidings hath put them in; nor will it be easy to shake such about the certainty of God's being the hearer of prayer, and his giving answers thereto upon their soul, before they have got them in their hand; whoever knew the truth of serving him in the spirit. I confess such a stated controversy may seem above ordinary reach, for some thus to come forth and persuade these who see with their eyes, that their sight is but an illusion of the fancy; and what they really hear, is but in a dream; there being no such thing as a visible object or audible sound: and yet this must pass for fanaticism, that we cannot be forced or healed out of it, which the Christian church hath known, and all the saints experienced since the time of *Abel* the righteous; but we fear not to own such a challenge. 5. I must say, they are far from respect to enthusiasm, or any impulse not ac-

according to the rule, whose experience can witness that truth of their being instructed of the Lord by a strong hand, and his following light on the soul with the most discernible power and authority, for some piece of work and service he hath called unto; for this they own, and only know in the way of the word, even when in some more than ordinary way, they are forced to see he teacheth as no man can do; and how easy he can make their work to follow, when he goes before to lead, with so sensible an up-breaking of strength as is found therewith.

3. What a visible repugnancy to *Reason* is here, though men should reject Scripture and the experience of the saints, when so much is to enforce by a rational demonstration on all, who never knew the power and efficacy of grace, and energy of the Spirit on their own soul. That here is no false shew or deceit; these being so clear, as they can be hid from none. 1. How the cause must be certain, and no counterfeit, where its peculiar and proper effects are so real and known to be such, as from no other cause could be produced: such as to make a divorce visible betwixt men's soul and what once was as their right eye, and move with a native unconstrained motion, to that from which they had before the greatest natural aversion; yea, to cause a satisfied choice of the cross and reproach of Christ, before all the pleasures of the earth; so that they are found to rejoice in tribulation, and when they are weak to know the greatest increase of strength; and must it not be a divine supernatural power that can dispose the heart into a most discernible tenderness and melting at the word; where no natural softness of spirit could be alledged for this, and cause them tremble with a surprising terror upon their spirit at the hearing of these truths which they formerly made sport at? It is, sure, such an effect also cannot be hid from the world, how real a transforming of the soul of a Christian there is by the power of the word into the same image and likeness, which is an effect could no more be the product of moral suasion, than he who paints a man's face could put life in such a dead image.

2. If there be no truth and certainty of infused principles of grace, and real efficacy of the Spirit; it is then clear, the most observable fruit and progress of the gospel should follow the greatest advantage of gifts and objective helps; when nothing is more obvious, even to reason, than the contrary of this, how *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*, and that the simplicity of the gospel, and *foolishness of preaching*, as the apostle calls it, is seen to exceed all human eloquence; yea, how the most polished discourse, and greatest strength of reason, does often make but weak preaching with the least real efficacy: And here none can deny, what in all times hath been so obvious a remark of a change by grace wrought on some, where the world see no ordinary means, no company, no example, nor any usual way for instruction could be subservient for it, to witness there is an immediate teaching of the Lord. 3. It is convincingly obvious to reason and sure, how there is an unseen power put forth upon the conscience, in giving it a wound, for which the furthest improvement of natural helps or moral suasion can find no cure; yea, such a wound is this sometimes seen to be, as no rack or outward torment is comparable thereto, which no reason then can allay, or the most convincing arguments and proposals of the greatest comforts in the world, but grows upon them the more they strive with it; when in one moment its relief from another cause is found to come, and oft such a cure as is no less marvellous and demonstrative of some higher power above reason to work this, than the wound itself, which all may see is something men cannot speak, nor human arguments enforce; but whatever word may then be made use of, it is an immediate communication from heaven of light and joy therewith on the soul, that makes it effectual. This is too sad a truth for men to sport at, who have no security from his hand, that in all ages have let the world know what the power of the conscience is. 4. I am sure none can be in the dark with such a discovery, That something there is above morality, or any external helps, as to the truth of a judicial *Induration* on the soul, when thus, as the word

shews, it is so visibly seen, how many may have got beyond the reach of means, yea, discernibly preached worse, more deaf and dead under the greatest advantages this way, whereby others are enlivened; men cannot but know no outward cause is here, nor is it so rare a sight this day within the church, to bring it in question how light and conviction (yea, when all that moral helps can possibly do, is put forth to the full) are yet seen to resolve in a further rage and malice against the truth, to shew it is an immediate stroke from GOD for men's abuse of light; and whence the wound is, there only can the cure be expected. 5. Though no access should be to convince from Scripture, yet if such great pretenders to morality will admit, that in some case the moral certainty of a thing can be so far evinced, as to the fullest satisfying of the mind, then it is sure, nothing possibly can be more than is here, to shew it's no dream or imposture for which so great a witness is given, from those whose truth and moral integrity their adversaries must confess, and fear not to credit in any personal interest; nor will they debate their judgment and capacity to discern of things as well as others (lest they should bring their own in question), and that from outward gain or incitements this way, such have no cause to be acted; nor is this a witness from some few, and in one age, or in a corner of the earth, but is the known record of the church since the beginning of time, and of such who have been ready at all times to render *a reason of this hope within them*, yea, appeal to the trial of others, even of their greatest adversaries, to come and see if the efficacy of grace, the inward workings of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, and that truth of a spiritual life, be any false shew; and is not the world forced to observe with what composure of spirit, and with their dying breath, when on the nearest approaches to another life, these fear not to attest this, and go in bearing that testimony before the tribunal of GOD?

4. I offer here to be considered, what such doctrine as is now spread, evidently implies, and whither it tends by undeniable consequence, should it be received in the church; when

thus, 1. We must look after some other Bible, than the written word; nor can its authority have any weight, as that which is *regula regulans*, when in so express terms the Christian faith and the truth of all supernatural revelation is here called to the bar of nature's light and the dictates of men's reason, to be owned or cast, as it answers thereto, which thus so expressly is owned as the alone standard to regulate the whole both of faith and obedience. 2. May not all see, it's not at the uppermost boughs, but at the root that such doctrine strikes, to subvert men's souls in that greatest truth of the *use* and *efficacy* of grace? yea, what a length they run beyond *Pelagius*, or the *Arminian* doctrine, who do not professedly deny all *efficacious working* of the grace of GOD, or its being a partial cause, though this they admit not antecedently and independent on the will, but eventually, because of its concurrence therewith; but here is the very being and operation of grace, and of all real influences from God on the soul at once cut off, except what some would restrict as miraculous to the first times of the church. 3. Then should there be no other operation ascribed to God, if this be admitted, for the begetting an increase of faith, than what is given to the ministry of men, by moral suasion, and in effect the same kind of efficiency to such as plant and water with him who giveth the increase. We deny not this honour have instruments to co-operate with him, in their own sphere: but what horrid blasphemy should it be, to put such in the same sphere of working and efficiency with the glorious GOD? 4. Is it not clear, how thus that great relation of the Mediator, as the influential head of his body, which is the church, and his governing by the sceptre of his spirit, is here wholly made void; yea, thus no use of prayer for spiritual influences, or to look up to heaven for our being strengthened in the inward man; and why do not these fasten their reproach also on the church's liturgy, for so gross a cheat in the public worship of God, which in effect they declare this to be, that men should pray for the *gracious assistance of the Spirit*, and to be *illuminated from above*, when this only is the effect of an enthusiastic

spirit. 5. And does not the admitting such doctrine most expressly infer, that *Enoch's* walking with God, *Jacob's* wrestling by prayer, and these sensible returns he had thereof, *Abraham's* believing against hope, and all appearances of reason, with these frequent changes of *David's* inward case, which we read in the *Psalms*, were but the illusions of fancy, and no use for such a record in the word this day to the church. I shall but further add, how strange a doctrine is here, that makes void the whole intent of the gospel, and scorns to take heaven at so low a rate as upon the account of grace, but must carry it by triumph, and for this will leave the Scripture, to find some new passage, since they cannot go in the same road, for being saved with such they so much hate and despise.

5. Let it be considered, what possible advantage these can pretend, to fasten such reproach on the protestant doctrine, and these who adhere to it, (against whom they thus appear,) of Enthusiasm, or its detracting from respect to morality, when they know, and upon their conscience cannot deny this witness, that such, 1. Own no impulse or internal motions which are not according to the rule, but that it is before this light they offer to come, and to his decision who speaks to men by the written word; if these discoveries, influences and efficacious workings of God on the soul, which their experience do witness, be not such as they ought to seek and look after by express Scripture warrant. 2. How these also are in greatest earnest both to discover and guard against the appearance of Enthusiasm, and to keep others off from splitting upon any such rock; nor can it be hid, what is their standing witness against it. 3. It is strange, with what confidence they can own this challenge of their decrying the vigorous improvement of our natural faculties, and want of respect to morality, who own the doctrine of the gospel; when they know none press more a practical conformity to the law, with these engagements that the freedom of the grace of God puts upon men thereto; but this we confess, and must witness with grief, that the morality of some heathens puts to shame the profes-

ed piety of many Christians in this age, whose walk gives too visible an advantage to question if their be a truth in religion, when so much imposture is found under this cover. 4. It is sure, this can be from no want of light, so public a decrying of the doctrine of grace, which is turned this day in fashion; when it is so clear, nothing is thence to make the law less strict, or sin less odious; but that here are the strongest enforcements to holiness, and its peculiar intent known to teach us *to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts*; yea, how thence are the clearest inferences for this, that such who have *these precious promises should cleanse themselves*, &c.

I must shut up this with an answer to two queries, that sometime have looked to me with a strange astonishment; The one is, that no error in the judgment so gross or monstrous is found to break up, but does still prove in some measure contagious, and wants not followers within the church. The other is, what can influence so strange a prejudice and opposition at the doctrine of grace, and righteousness of the gospel, as is at this day, that men should be found to take so sad a revenge upon themselves, from pure malice at so excellent a truth; when it is sure, these do not think to enforce their doctrine by a convincing witness of such heights of morality in their practice, as they contended for by their pen; but is too obvious, how far in this they comply with the temper of a loose time, to subvert in so far the Christian religion, that they have none at all. For the first of these, it needs not be strange if we consider, 1. that no error in the judgment, but is a work of the flesh, and a most natural suiting thus betwixt a false way and a corrupt heart. 2. Since the greatest contempt of God, which men can witness, is their not receiving the truth when it is clearly offered; it is not strange that a delivering up of their reason and judgment unto strong delusions, should be made to answer thereto, which is certainly one of the greatest strokes from God inflicted here. And is it not clear how these strong incitements from the devil, with the power and energy thereof, are more observably witnessed upon the mind, than upon the affections;

yea, such monstrous productions are this way, as may be more demonstrative of his immediate and mighty working on the soul, than the most horrid acts of profaneness: Thus also the world may see, 'tis the acting over the same scheme, though new actors are brought forth; and in what a round and circle delusion moves, and how old antiquated errors are seen to rise and spread, which former times seemed to have buried. For the other query, how so strange an opposition is this day found against the gospel, and the righteousness thereof, none needs to wonder, when it's so clear, first, That the law suits more naturally to men than the doctrine of the gospel, Secondly, That there are degrees of opposition to some points of the truth as they are more for the glory of God and promoting of his interest; and therefore is it not strange, so great an assault is here to poison this fountain.

3. What can be more clear, than that account the apostle gives to resolve this, Rom. ix. 32, in their case who withstood then the righteousness of faith; *for they stumbled at that stumbling stone*; and therefore does the Holy Ghost call it, *a submitting to the righteousness of God*, which to nature is as a bowing down below that grandeur and glorying in itself, which it cannot endure to give.

CHAP. V.

A Third particular upon this subject, is some serious enquiry into these grounds, Why among these who profess godliness in this age, a thorough and solid confirmation in the truth is now so rare, and their persuasion of it little proportioned to the greatness of that seal and attestation which is this day before them; for it is too manifest, which the way of most within the church doth witness, how doubtful and fluctuating that reliance they have on Scripture-truths is, as a thing that lies in opinion, and probable conjectures, more than in any degree of certitude. I confess it is the peculiar work of the Spirit to open the eyes, and enlighten the soul by an effective illumination, and discover to us the evi-

dences of divine truths; nor can the proposal of the object with the greatest certainty of evidence, or by any moral reasoning, cause men discern spiritual things spiritually; since there must be a supernatural light, and suiting of the visive faculty to the object; but is it not clear also, how much the obstruction and culpable cause is on our part, and we can only blame ourselves why such a price for wisdom is put in men's hands, and no heart to improve it: some few of these *causes* I shall here instance, the ignorance whereof keeps us from a cure, because the disease is so little known.

Sec. 1. Christians do but little reflect upon their own experience, to know what it means, nor have their conceptions any proportion to the greatness of these truths that are before them, which is one special cause why so much is given to establish and strengthen, and yet so unanswerable an improvement for this end; but what is to be understood here by serious reflection, I must say, seems a rare exercise to most who profess godliness in this time: 1. To bring near their thoughts to the truth, for getting another sight thereof than they formerly had, and their spirits more deeply impressed with so great an import of these things which are freely given them of God; how they are no shadow nor appearances of things, but most visible realities. 2. To have such a returning of the soul upon itself, as to question over again the certainty of these truths which are thus made out by experience, yea, as at a stand how to credit their own eyes therewith, they are so marvellous and great; thus was it with *Solomon*, 2 Chron. vi. 18. *But will God in very deed dwell with men upon the earth?* And such was the exercise of that poor woman after so strange a surprisal of providence, Gen. xvi. 13. *Have I also looked after him who seeth me!* Is this the Lord? And do my eyes truly see what I see in so great a mercy? O what a choice and confirming exercise should this be, when a Christian can thus sit alone, and reflect on their experience; it is sure I exercise reason, I am not asleep but awaking; and herein know I am not deceived, that there is a spiritual life and immediate fellowship with God here, and that I know

whom I have believed; yea, except I contradict my sense as well as reason, I am sure, with that God on whose word I lean for eternal life, I have been oft sensibly refreshed, and found that in his company which no words can express.

Sect. 2. There is this *cause* may be seen, The very aims and proposals of Christians are so low, and their enquiry not suited to such a warrant as they have, John xvi. 24. *To ask that their joy may be full:* but these great confirmations of the truth which the saints have oft had, and yet are communicable in the way of the word, seem by most of this generation to be laid by as some extraordinary things; which doth clearly witness, 1. An unacquaintedness with the Scripture, and the extent of many promises there, with which Christians thus are allowed to trade, for getting up to more high degrees of peace, comfort, and assurance of the truth, than most have either a heart to seek, or faith to credit: O what a depth this is, that will never be fully opened up, until we be in heaven, what it is to have the written word so near, and what this might be to a Christian here by the way. 2. This shews how little a further growth in the faith of assent is known, and that giving all diligence to the full assurance of hope, as that with which our growth in love, patience, humility, is indissolubly linked, and keeps a proportion. 3. There is little coming up to that practice, where such great things from the Lord hath been shewed to his people in former times; *Our fathers trusted in thee, and were helped*, Psal. xxii. 3. These had indeed a marvellous seal, and rare confirmations of the truth; which seem strange to us; not that they were out of the way of the promise, but because the ancient holiness of these times is so little known. How rare a practice is it to believe, to follow the Lord fully, and have a large venture in his hand, and what such a wrestling, and supplication with weeping, that is Hof. xii. 4. by which they had power with God, and did prevail; and therefore are many rare mercies with-held from us, which lie hid in the word.

Sect. 3. It may be seen, how easy an assent most find to

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the great fundamentals of the Scripture; and the church is no less ruined this day by credulity, than professed Atheism; which is too evident a cause why so many know not what it is to believe, or be concerned about such a thing, for thus they take all on trust, are carried in the crowd, not disquieted with these assaults a serious Christian is oft pressed with; yea, come not that length to question the certainty of the ground whereon they build, if it be not to unsettle themselves more than to confirm. Oh! what a sad sight may this be, when it is no less than the venture of an immortal soul for eternity, about which if men be deceived, they are deceived indeed; and is it not seen, what a fatal conjunction oft is betwixt credulity and imposture, where the deceiver and such as find it easy to believe, meet together in the same road.

SecT. 4. Though from reason there is a sufficiency of evidence to convince, yet is it clear, that something farther is indispensibly required for a firm assent to the truth; which is to know the truth and reality of the gospel by experience on the soul; for without this there can be no cure for Atheism, nor can it be known there is a truth in that religion they profess, when within themselves there is such a contradiction to it; it is indeed strange, what assent these can give to the supernatural truths of the word, which though nothing is more sure in itself, yet from them is a false witness, in so far as it is against their own knowledge, whilst their conscience must say, the Scripture was never that to them, that it declares itself to be, and that witness which it bears of the life of the Spirit, the earnest of heaven, an immediate fellowship with God, and that the preached gospel is the power and wisdom of God, was yet never to them a reality, but as herein they confess God to be true, they make themselves liars, and contradict their own light.

SecT. 5. Is not this visible before us? How Atheism is now turned contagious beyond the rate of former times; and seems to be the great assault peculiarly suited to this age, where the power of darkness most appears; a time when that design was never more on foot to have the truth kept doubtful, that

it be more a problem, and matter of opinion than of certainty, and so much endeavour to cast reproach on the way of the Lord; yea, a time when there is a sore shaking by contrary doctrine, the growth of scandal, and obvious blots on the profession of godliness, so that many are in hazard to resolve their faith in an uncertainty of all principles, and clearly lose any assured persuasion of the truth of religion; but as this is witnessed, and one of the sad appearances of the time, it gives solid ground also to hope. 1. For a further establishment Christians shall be led up to before this generation pass. 2. That some great discoveries and confirmations of the truth are yet to break up, and such a brightness, that will be as marvellous as the strange darkness over the church hath been; and that the Atheism of this age shall have a cure, though we may fear in some sharp and extraordinary way, when ordinary means for this end have been so ineffectual.

Set. 6. Is not here too evident a cause, whence so much dark and fluctuating assent is to the truth, when such confirmations of its certainty are in our sight: they are few who find it a great business to be eternally saved, and have their soul kept under such a weight, to whom the thoughts of a heaven or hell are brought near, as undoubted realities, betwixt which there is no middle state after death, but knows they must shortly be the inhabitants either of the one or the other; for if such a deep impression of this were on men's souls, could they possibly be so unconcerned in their being sure of the foundation whereon they have so great a venture. Such are indeed a rare sight in this age, whose working out their *Salvation is with fear and trembling*; and most so far seem to be lost in a throng of other things, that this greatest question which can occur in all their life, *If they be born again?* is laid aside until they be ready to die. Oh! hath our light thus put us out of seriousness, and giving all diligence which is so indispensibly required of these who mind heaven; will gifts, and a high repute in the church, or a fair shew in the flesh, be a sure evidence to cause rejoicing, when one comes to die? This is a sad subject, and I must say, *If these*

characters of godliness the Scripture hath given were seriously pondered, there was never an age wherein more professors are like to come short of heaven, and be found in a fundamental delusion about their state than this is; for which some sad evidences I shall here offer:

1. That loose conception many have got of religion, which they have framed in their own mould, so as to find an easy cure for all their doubts, and shift off the necessity of fear, tenderness and diligence in making sure of eternal life, and thus are at work to have such a latitude in their principles, as may suit the strait and narrow gate which leadeth to life unto that liberty they take in their practice. 2 May we not see how far it is become a matter of wit and invention to be Christians, and with what singular advantage many have learned to act handsomely such a part; as if divinity were rather a science to be learned by rules of art, than a matter of sense and feeling, or some exquisite image to please their eye, but such as can put forth no vital acts. 3. Are not these times such, wherein light hath in a strange manner out-gone conscience, and tenderness, and that which the apostle calls the form of knowledge, and of truth is like to ruin many, Rom. iii. So that it is rare to find a warming heat with a large profession, such as can make it convincing to others, and commends it to their conscience. 4. It is now a time wherein religion is remarkably enlarged in the notion, but Oh how much abridged in the practice, even from what it hath been in times of greater ignorance. I must say, that length many in this age have come in the *Theory* of practical godliness, is like to be a sad snare to help some to perish with the more confidence and quiet. 5. It may be too obvious, there hath not been an age of the church wherein professors seemed further off from getting good of the gospel, and less access to reprove, or for a faithful freedom with most, than is now; but such is the sore and disease of many, as cannot endure to be touched, and therefore it is no wonder that God should make so sharp an application by the rod, of that which men will not apply to themselves from the word, or

bear from others. 6. How sad an evidence of this time is it, when the religion of so many may be seen to have begun at their practice, before it once began at the heart, and thence is it so easy to be Christians in company, and in public duties with others, who know little what it is to be such alone, and be serious in these more retired exercises of religion, which keeps the closest communication with the vital parts of Christianity; but it is sure, the greatest part of a Christian's work is that which is least seen, and hid from the eyes of others. 7. It may be said, there hath not been a time wherein more were like to perish at an *almost* in Christianity, and with hid reserves in their heart in a professed following of the LORD, than is now; and that there is a right hand and right eye, which ere men who profess the truth adventure to quit; they will rather hazard all, whence is there such a darkening of light, and extenuating controversies in a suffering time, when it may be seen, it is not so much a matter of dark difference as the scruple lies at the cross in general, that for such a step in the narrow gate they must have an exception.

8. I shall but add this very sad evidence of the hazard of professors in this age, that many are like to please themselves with such a mould of piety as cometh short of moral righteousness; and lay aside that observance of the second table, which is so indispensibly required of all the followers of God. O! what an amazing thing is this! as if this were not an essential part of holiness, *without which none shall see the Lord*; and a part of these weightier things of the law, which is to *do justice, love mercy*, as well as *walk humbly with God*; there is not under the New Testament a more dreadful threatening than against this, 1. Thes. iv. 6. That no man over-reach his brother, for God is the avenger of all such, and hath that mark put upon it when it is found among such who profess themselves his people, that it over-passeth the deeds of the wicked, Jer. v. 28; yea, I must say, in nothing could the height of malice against Jesus Christ act more to bring the truth under reproach, and cause the profane world blaspheme, than for any to personate religion for a cover to such a practice.

CHAP. VI.

IN the last place, This great truth of the verification of the Scripture would be considered as it leads *into practice*, and that singular advantage this way might be found, if we knew how to improve it; since this is a talent for trade, not for contemplation; yea, it may be said with a sure warrant, This is the greatest in order to a Christian's comfort and establishment which he can trade with within time; which in some following *Uses* I shall briefly touch.

Señ. 1. Thus should every one of the saints pursue a certainty of his own about the truth, that the written word is the testimony of the living God, which is indispensibly necessary for him to have, else he can have none at all; since this is a personal business, where all must prove their own work; for clearing of which, we have to consider, 1. How rare and inestimable a thing this certainty which I call a Christian's own, is to difference from what most of ordinary professors in these times satisfy themselves with. 2. How this way it is to be reached. As to the first, It is such, 1. That causeth one to rejoice within himself, and have a feast there whereof none else can partake, which hath no dependence on others, but is alone betwixt God and the soul. 2. It is such as should oblige him to seal the truth, though there were none else, and is sufficient to put his soul to rest in a satisfied reliance on the word, though he have no incitement from the example of others, and be cast in a time wherein religion is every-where spoken against. 3. Such a certainty is this of the truth as hath been tried by temptation, and hath not wanted a previous conflict ere they came by it; yea, lies so near them, as to be a serious exercise on their soul to know the solidity of that ground whereon so great an interest must be built; and thus the greater assaults, there are, it is found the way to a further length in establishment. 4. It is such wherewith these are not easily satisfied who have once got it; but it is some part of their continued work to know the

Lord, by following on to know him in his faithfulness in the word, that he is surely that to them which he hath declared himself to be; and what a visible impress there is of his truth in his providences towards others. 5. This is such as brings unspeakable support in a dark case, and helps the Christian to rejoice in the promise, when no appearances are, how the performance should come, yea, to a satisfied rolling over on God to reconcile his word and works when they seem to juggle, and thus oppose what he hath said, to what he hath done; knowing these can be in no real contradiction to one another. 6. So excellent a thing is this certainty of a Christian's own, as leads into an unspeakable repose and quiet of the soul in that last venture for eternity, when on the faithfulness of God in his word he must lay the dead grip (which we see how dark a business it is to many) when thus so great an earnest he finds in his hands of these truths, the accomplishment whereof goes beyond death, which are the resurrection of the dead, and a being for ever with God; that he knoweth these are the promises of God, whose sensible presence, and familiar approaches to the soul, a near converse with him, yea, his very immediate help from heaven in a day of strait he knows so well here by the way, to be a sure performance of the word, and by marvellous confirmations thereof hath oft proved.

2. Let us consider, of what singular use these near approaches of a Christian to the word, to know and be further confirmed of the faithfulness of God there in the providences of his life, should be for such certainty: 1. That this is something not reached by any transient glances of light, or some present flash of affection; but here must be a solid and rational arguing from the evidences of the premises to the truth of the conclusion; That since he is sure, *The way of the Lord is perfect, and his word tried*, Psa. xviii. 30. which so oft he hath put to an essay, and in his experience had so many personal returns of its truth, he can of nothing be more certain, than he is of its being a safe ground for adventuring on. 2. Thus is the Lord's seal to his truth made discernible, and

such a secret token and mark given thereof, which none can counterfeit. 3. Thus is so enriching a trade to be followed, as might every day lay some new strengthening remarks in our way of the Lord's being God, and his unspotted faithfulness in the word, whereon we have so great a venture.

Seet. 2. There is this *use* which necessarily follows from the former, and a singular advantage Christians should make of the present subject, with these clear discoveries before them of the Scripture's verification, *for a thorough and solid determining their state in Christ*, and that thus they may get up to some higher degrees of assurance thereof, than what most satisfy themselves with. When to ease the Christian's work in this trial, and in multiplying marks, here is a short abridgment of all he may have at his hand, to know the certainty of the word, and these great supernatural truths there, by experience on his own soul; so as not in the dark, and with a doubtful assent, but from what he hath both seen and felt, he can put to this seal, *That God is true* therein. We know, until the saints be fully possessed of heaven, nothing can bring a joy beyond this, *to be thoroughly assured of their being for ever there, and in his presence where there is fulness of joy*, they shall pass the long ages of eternity; nor can any be too serious and concerned for making this sure; yet it cannot be denied, but some excess even here is this day in the road of practical divinity, and these voluminous enlargements about signs and evidences of grace, (in which much cautious respect needs to the various sizes and degrees of growth amongst Christians and vicissitudes of their inward case) yea, by extending these in so different a mould and shape, as hath tended to darken and render perplex the way to some, more than for solid quiet of their spirits. The portraiture of a Christian is such, as none can draw to one model, but with respect to the infancy of some, as well as the further age and establishment of others. What I intend here, is but a short touch only for clearing this, how the Christian's way and method of trial necessarily lies, in a serious pursuance to know the truth, and have more near converse with its verification on the soul, as

the best way to know their state, and clearing up of their evidences for heaven; and how these are so closely linked, as the one must bring forward the other; for which some few things I shall first premise, that by most of professed Christians, I must say, seem to be little understood.

1. That there is none but in some measure must know a practical converse with the word and its accomplishment, if they be not strangers to the very essentials of Christianity; nor can there possibly be a true idea and image of godliness impressed on the soul of any, but as it answers to the Scripture, and presents its lively impress thereon.

2. That these hid marks, whence the saints know the Scripture to be the word of God, are such as with the same evidence answer to determine their state and being in Christ; yea such, that by looking in on inherent qualifications, none can solidly argue to the certainty of grace from them, further than they know the certainty of the word, and its accomplishment on them. Now what singular advantage should a Christian thus find, when by this thread, as it were, in his hand, and so sure a rule and line of trial, he can follow his interest in Christ, and have the sight thereof kept clear by that undoubted interest and propriety he hath in the word, from its sure accomplishment to him; the want whereof, is it not too obvious a cause of such darkness and confusion as attends many in these enquiries they have about their state.

3. Though it is undeniable that the world sees at a distance, and cannot get by some convincing witness of the Scripture's taking place, both in providences of mercy, and these clear instances in which the Lord is known by the judgment he executes; yet do they not know, nor can possibly reach the Christian's trade here, which lies hid and deep in the soul, in that sensible converse these have with the word, and its continued verification to them.

4. Doth not the word shew, what the saints must know by experience, how close these keep together in one tie; as we see them conjoined, John iii. 33. That such who truly believe, know also what a putting their seal to the truth is; since

they are not only convertible terms, in so far as the one cannot be wanting, where the other really is, but such that the certainty of the one must be cleared up by the other. I deny not a dogmatical faith is in some measure reached when not saving; but it may be clearly evinced, that no true solid assent is to supernatural truths, without experience and a knowing the power, and efficacy thereof on the soul; nor can there be a fiducial application and recumbency on the truth, where this is wanting.

5. Though it is too sadly known, as one cause of such dark evidences most have of their state, that the Spirit of sanctification runs so low, and untenderness in their walk; I must say, this also may be no less clear, which is so little persuasion of the certainty of the truth; and a sad mistake in the method most take, by seeking to secure a right and interest there, without a serious pursuance to be solidly founded thereon. And is not here the rise of such hesitation, and a trembling grip so many have in parting with time, and that great venture of the soul on the promise; their work hath been so little by the way to have their adherence to the truth strengthened by *knowing in whom they have believed*, which made it so easy to the Apostle to put over himself and interests on that security.

6. This seems to be little considered, in such enquiries some have about their inward state, and whether they believe or not; how it is much greater to believe the truth in general, than any personal application thereof can be in their case; for which the apostle clearly reasons, Rom. viii. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, how will he not with him give us all things?* for if we be assured of that in which the greatest difficulty of faith lies, must it not by clear consequence follow, that what concerns our interest is but a straining at a gnat, when such a thing is once swallowed; and where a Christian has got this length, to believe the testimony of God is such whereon with greatest security he can repose his soul; personal evidences cannot then stay behind, if there be a serious endeavour in their essays after holiness. For the greatest wonder

is here to believe the truth of the gospel, that *he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto him*, more than his saving of me; and it may be too obvious as the cause whence the last is obstructed, from so small establishment in the first.

Having premised these, for clearing a truth of such weight, I shall offer some things to evince the necessity of a near and practical converse with the word in its accomplishment on the soul, as that without which no effectual access can be to clearing up of evidences, and certainty of our state in Christ; when it is so manifest, where this is wanting who can discern,

1. The *truth and solidity of grace*, how it is no casual thing, but such as most convincingly answers the word, and is its native product; which if it be not discerned, the one half of a Christian's evidence, from the *truth of holiness and fruits of the Spirit* is then kept out of sight; for whatever is seen of the being of grace in its *effects*, yet does he not see it in the *cause*, and how in that alone channel of the word and promise its conveyance is to the soul; yea, without this could none comfortably reflect on the *things freely given him of God*, as knowing them to be such; and on his own experience of the work and efficacy of the Spirit, if he cannot discern the clear making out of the Scripture there.

2. Without this could none know, what so rare and divine an art means, (than which I may say, in a mediate way, nothing can be of more use for trial of a Christian state,) to *compare spiritual things with spiritual*, such as the actings and influences of the Spirit with the word, inherent evidences with the written promise; nor according to this can he discern a divine efficacious concurrence meet him in the way of duty; and how the *original* which is without in the word, and its transcript within on the soul, are one and the same; for what are the rarest inward qualifications upon the matter, and how little should they amount to a clear distinguishing evidence, if this *comparing work* of a Christian be not known, how to set things one against another, so as each be under its proper aspect.

3. It may be clear, without this no other converse with

the Bible could let a Christian know, what the *truth's dwelling within him* is, or how much thereof hath been turned into a practical history, and in such a character writ over upon his heart, that he is sure angels nor men could never have done; nor can he see how the same *ingrafted* and living truth (by as sure a demonstration as ever was of the motion of the blood) makes its way through the veins and conduits of a Christian's walk, for putting forth of vital acts there; in a right discerning of which, should that great demonstration be convincingly clear, that seems as a strange and dark thing to many, what it is to be the *declared epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart*, 2 Cor. iii. 3.

4. Without this could none of the saints see their right and claim to the promise clothed with the actual possession thereof; which is the earnest here of that inheritance above; but where this is clear, what a marvellous evidence comes therewith, to the furthest quieting of the soul; when thus a Christian reflects, and can reason with himself, what of the Scripture and these great supernatural truths there, which the world knows not, he hath now made his *own*, and not in the offer and promise only, but in real performances.

5. Is it not clear, without some near and serious converse with the Scripture, in the certainty of its verification, none could know the seal of the Spirit; which though sometimes it is so immediate and over-powering a testimony as silenceth all doubts and fears, when it hath no respect to any work of grace, or inherent evidences; yet even then it is *the seal of the Spirit of the promise*, Eph. i. 13. and such that cannot be understood but as a sure accomplishment of the word.

6. Let us but consider, what Christian assurance is (I mean such as in a mediate way can be reached,) and is it not a practical syllogism, where the first proposition must still be a Scripture-truth, and concludes from these sure and undoubted experiments they have thereof on their soul? for thus a Christian solidly reasons; can I debate more my being for ever in heaven with God, who do so certainly experience what the

Scripture has given as an infallible sign of the truth of another world, and a being entered into it here; so as to breathe another air, and from a state of darkness to be taken into a marvellous light, which once it is sure I knew not, nor could credit its reality on report; yea, a light by which I discern the truth of spiritual objects to be as real as I see these heavens and earth by the light of the sun, and I am taught the way of sensible converse therewith. Now when thus he reflects, does not there meet in one demonstration, the two greatest things can be desired until he be in heaven, which are the *certainty of the written word*, and of his *state and being in Christ*? and thus see, how they answer other, and each so indissolubly tied, that no clear satisfying evidence can be of the last, but in a serious pursuit of the first.

SECT. 3. Such is this subject, and the serious *improvement* thereof, as might lead us in to know that notable art of religion more in its *practice*, which may be truly called *scientia architectonica*, an art for extracting out of all occurrences of the time, and strangest providences, what should tend to our further fixing in the truth, and make it easy and clear, how to reduce the works of God unto the written word; yea, to resolve his judgments through the earth in their true cause and original, which I must say from trial, is one of the rarest of essays men could pursue against Atheism, and for assuring our heart more of the being and faithfulness of God, when thus it's seen how all the lines of providence lead from the Scripture, and return hither again, and do most visibly begin and end there; so that whither a discerning Christian looks, yet cannot he look off this, though he go from one creature to another, and from one piece of the work of God to another; but all still meets with a most obvious tendency to make this demonstration clear, *That God is true*. For myself, I seriously profess, when such dark clouds are now casting up, and amazing occurrences, so many things to imbitter the world, this is the most strengthening discovery I find within time, that such clear glances of the *faithfulness of God* there are, and these so convincingly shewed forth amidst the great-

est darkness and confusions, as leaves no access to debate the certainty thereof; for nothing else I see but what might help to crush and make faint, if this were not so sure, *God, hath spoken in his holiness* and nothing hitherto hath failed thereof; what was the word of *Luther, Pene desperassem nisi Christus esset caput Ecclesiæ*; might we not now say, if the same truth stood not good to us, and that the saddest of events brings so much in them, to strengthen and be a further seal to the word: But now is the church sore tossed, we can also see the need thereof, and when such rage and hatred there is against godliness, that it gets no worse entertainment than was foretold. Is the truth avowedly opposed and borne down? there doth the Scripture take place. Is it reproached? it behoved so to be. Yea, is it by subtilty and under a cover of friendship assaulted? this also is some part of its own accomplishment. Do we not see, wickedness is still the same? and that it is the same spirit now acts in the worst of men that was in former ages? which should no less tend to a confirming us of the certainty of the word, than the truth of holiness; have we seen any such dark hours as did ever want a witness to that blessed promise of a watching providence over the church? but when he smites with the one hand, he is still found to uphold by the other; and no such concurrence of things to cause grief, but something as remarkably set against it, to be matter of joy and encouragement in the Lord; nor in any time is such poison vented, but the very same time is found to bring an antidote with it, and the greatest assaults against the truth made subservient for her further triumph. Now it is sure, this is no dream, no romance, or a conjectural thing, but what in the greatest composure of spirit, each Christian can discern and know its truth to be as undeniable and clear, as it is certain there is a sun that shines in the firmament. What an inestimable advantage is here, if we knew how to improve it, that under all the varieties of providences within time, we may go in and out and find pasture, and thus get our faith more strengthened, in seeing how men are forced to promote God's design by opposing it, and in re-

sisting his will to fulfil it; the smallest thing made subservient to great purposes, when the most promising appearances are blasted; how most are every-where thronged about personal interests, and their own things taking them up, whilst the holy God does most convincingly turn all for his end. Yea, if we knew how to follow this great discovery, we should convincingly see the greatest surprisals of providence which upon no principles of reason men could foresee, or any connection betwixt the means and such a product; how exactly they answer the word, and are a seal thereto. I shall but add, how it is not more obvious, that to every creature, faculty, and operation, there is as it were a thread fastened by which one may follow up and see *that God is*, than its discernible here, how close a conjunction is betwixt the word and each piece of his work, yea, every step of providence in the earth; whereby we may know, he is that which the Scripture declares him to be.

Sect. 4. This peculiar advantage should Christians make of so great a discovery of the *faithfulness of God*, and nothing fails of all that he has spoken in his word; for adventuring with a more full security on these *rare politics of the Bible*, which concern men's interests within time: yea, thus to steer their course under many vicissitudes of life, by such maxims of divine policy, which can neither err nor possibly admit a fallacy or mistake. I must touch this a little, it is so strange how small weight even with most of professed Christians these seem to have; and whatever respect they witness to this blessed record, in taking it as their security for a life to come, or any spiritual interests; yet is it not seen, how visible an exception is made in their reliance on the word, for things of this life, but they will needs strive to be wise in their actions, like the men of the residue of the nations, and have the eternal and unchangeable truths of God come down to their mould and reasonings; which is an Atheism too manifestly owned every where. Oh what can this mean, to half the Scripture of God in such a manner, as to adventure with some professed security, on what is there for an eternal inte-

rest, but on other principles and contrivances go for their concernments within time; yea, so far allow themselves to lay this aside, as that which they think cannot possibly suit the posture and condition of their outward affairs: But for clearing this truth, I shall first offer some things to shew with what demonstrative evidence a Christian may adventure here on the certainty of such infallible rules, for all his temporal interests as well as these that concern an after-state; and next offer some particular instances, where this demonstration may be more clearly understood.

1. Can we admit a divine authority of the Scripture, and not see how the faithfulness of God stands good for every line and syllable there; yea, that these rules it holds forth must be no less sure for the least of a Christian's interest, than for an eternal salvation by Jesus Christ.

2. Is not this beyond all possible debate, how great an interest men's outward lot and concernments have in the written word, that though no respect unto the command, principles of self-love, and the interest of *gain* as well as of *duty* should oblige to a close adherence thereto.

3. Though it seem as a romance to many, yet must we either quit the Scripture, or credit this, that the most infallible rules for one to raise his fortune, and insure a destiny that can controul the stars, are given forth there, where that evidently is found, *Sapiens dominabitur astris, & quo modo unusquisque faber potest esse fortuna sua.*

4. Are not these rules also known and tried, so as the experience of all, who have followed the way of the Lord, did yet never fail to witness.

5. And is it not clear, how such rules there are, of that universal truth, as in no time the contrary was ever seen to be true; but the greatest sun-shine on men's wicked devices, and their contrivements of sinful policy, are still seen in the close to have some sad and tragic result; yea, that the bringing these to pass, hath most convincingly tended for their further ruin.

6. Is not the true cause visibly writ forth here, whence the

falling out of events is so frequently seen to be cross to all ordinary rules and methods of second causes, and the wise disappointed in their work, for attaining such ends, as could not but be expected to follow thereon, from appearances to reason; yea, that such fruitless enquiries, with anxious and inordinate toil, the sad miscarriage of most desired and deeply contrived projects, is so usual a sight in the world, so as men's hearts are sometimes ready to despair of all their labours under the sun; that the Scripture hath so little credit in their private concerns but will steer their course by some other compass for attainment of what they intend.

7. Is not this with greatest evidence demonstrable, how practical prudence is the native effect of piety; and what helps to make one more a Christian, hath a necessary tendency therewith to make him more wise: and to these rare accomplishments of true policy; when these are so clear: How much it helps to get command over the heart, the moderation of passions. 2. For one to know and discern his own way, which is to be wise at home, and in what his nearest concerns lie, Prov. xiv. 8. 3. To improve the present providence, and every change of his lot, for some further gain, so as he can follow his interest, by abasement as well as abounding, and get up by that which seems most to depress him. 4. To have a more clear view of the consequence and future issue of things, by knowing how to discern time and judgment, *A wise man foreseeth the evil, and hides himself*, Prov. xxiii. 3. 5. Such also is its true tendency, to cause that temperature and counterpoise in the soul, amidst these continued vicissitudes here, as he can rejoice with fear, and have his greatest confidence under guard of a watchful circumspection. 6. Is it not evidently found in so far as one walks by these rules, how his hand worketh by the guidance of his heart, and does then act dextrously? which *Solomon*, that great observer, did so much regard, Eccl. x. 2. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left.* Yea, then is light found to shine on his paths, for a more clear

and easy getting through these encumbrances which are found so distracting, and ready to sink the spirit of others.

8. For such as lay the whole Scripture aside, and have no such weight upon them of an eternal state, It is not strange this should have no credit for their interests within time; but is not here matter of astonishment, what respect and confidence men witness, for adventuring upon one part of the Bible, who visibly shew they have no confidence for the other? Can such be in earnest to improve supernatural truths there for spiritual things, who see nothing of its use on this account, what a sure trade they might drive in order to their temporal interests, (yea, whilst they converse not with the very notion of such a thing?) I must say, no reason can comprehend this, how principles of self-love should have so little influence on men; nor can it be answered, but by admitting one of these two, that either the Scripture is not truly owned and believed by most of professed Christians as a security, on which they can adventure their heaven; since the same assurances are there by the God of truth, for men's interests here in the way; or that such knowingly betray the end they propose to themselves in their labours under the sun, and act in direct opposition thereto, by so strange a neglect, and laying aside of the Scripture.

Having premised these, for giving light to so concerning a truth; let us but clearly state so great a duty, as the practical use and improvement of the word is in a temporal case, and with respect to our present interests in this life, as well as these which are eternal; that we may see the infallible connection is betwixt the one and the other; *for he hath shewed thee, O man what is good*, as well as what is just, and where the surest method and way lies for one to seek himself, and be wise for their own private interest; yea, to attain and enjoy an outward lot with unspeakable more advantage, than most let themselves know, to prevent disappointments, with fore and stinging crosses, that may be seen comes not out of the dust, but are a product that all might discern from the word, such means they choose to themselves must bring forth.

It is clear, that the same light which shews the way for being eternally saved, lets men also see an exact and infallible method, in all their concerns within time, and for such a conduct as they may *walk surely*, by rule, and not at an adventure for this end; the flighting whereof hath caused many with fore toil sow the wind unto themselves. I come now to instance some of these rare *politics*, and highest *principles* of wisdom given to us in the written word, in living up to which, one may as it were choose his own fortune; I offer these, which are such as we may fear more it shall cease to be day and night, seed-time and harvest, than that any of these fail.

1. *Principle*, That to secure the success of our way, in the appointed use of means, nothing is so effectual as a thorough commitment thereof to the Lord; as it is clear, Psal. xxxvii. 5. Prov. xvi. 3; and a truth hath such a seal from experience, that since religion was in the world, I must say none ever tried it in vain; but the want of this hath instructed many to their cost, how deceitful a thing the greatest abundance of means oft prove. Now for confirming it, let us but compare the remarks and histories of all times with the word, and I am sure it can be hid from none, how the most sad ruining strokes are seen to be a pit of men's own digging, and most observably hath met these, who would choose a way to themselves, and frame a policy of their own, in counteracting the word, which did at last undo them.

2. *Principle*, If the Scripture be true, men's interest and policy here then is, *That it is better to trust in God, than put confidence in man; yea, better to trust in God, than put confidence in Princes*, Psalm cxviii. 8. which is a truth that never shamed the face of any to this day who adventured thereon, but oft hath their returns exceeded their venture. And most remarkably these have been even before the world set against one another, which we see, Psalm lii. 7, 8. *Lo this is the man that made God his strength, &c. But I am as a green olive tree, I trust in the mercy of God for ever.* No time can make that thrive on which the LORD puts so dreadful a mark, as he hath done upon human confidence, Jer. xv. 5. But we

may see, it was never more discernible to the world than at this day; with such a breaking of visible props, as calls aloud to *cease from man*, and thus be instructed, how *men of low degree are vanity, and great men a lie*, Psalm. lxii. 9. so as to know the alone certainty of that which is, ver. 7, *In God is my salvation, and glory; the rock of my strength and my refuge, is God*. But Oh how rare a practice is it in the world, to roll the burden of an outward interest so fully on God, as to have the heart at a true repose and quiet, when visible appearances are not.

3. *Principle*, Though nothing be more cross to the politics of this age; yet it is clear, *That to court humility is the rising hand, and the surest way for preventing humbling strokes*, as we see Mat. xviii. 4. And which seem strange, tho' convincingly obvious in all times, that Christians lying near the dust in a low self esteem, and being much on their knees, will keep such more on their feet, than the eager graspings of others at that shadow which flies the more it is followed. *Nam sic descendendo, ascendendum est in via Christiana*.

4. *Principle*, *That the surest mean to have adversaries gained to be friends, is by having our ways directed to please God*, Prov. xvi. 7; and thus endeavour a commending ourselves to the conscience of men, but not their humours; for which so great an assurance is in the word, with that convincing seal from experience, and the remarks of every age, as a Christian can solidly reason; When I follow my duty, then it is sure, I follow my interest; and in consulting how to be accepted of God, and give him the preference to all, I keep the straight line to gain both on the conscience and respect of others. I know some will object the sad entertainment *faithfulness* gets in the world; and which cannot be denied, how close adherence to the way of God, hath brought many under a dark cloud; but is it not as certainly known with what advantage this hath still brought them out; so as their present loss hath brought a double gain, yea, found to meet such many days after, even to the conviction of others.

5. *Principle* is this, *That it's more true policy to give to the*

poor, where no retribution can be looked for, than to give to the rich, Prov. xx. 27; which if designed for God, does also insure its return, and compensation from him. I know nothing seems more cross to reason and the rules most in such a time walk by; but if the Lord be God, and the Scripture his word and testimony, there should be no halting here; for to these is an express bond given from heaven, and put in register here upon earth, in which he who keepeth truth with men for ever, hath insured by his faithfulness, that what is given to the poor, is lent to the Lord, and he will repay it; and I must say, none ever took this in earnest for their security, and found it fail; but when it seemed to be lost, and as cast on the waters, it hath been repaired, with a four-fold more to them or theirs. This I am sure many are debtors to witness; as also that no such bank can be, for the large improvement of a little, and where the principal will never be lost. But I must further add, in behalf of the faithfulness of God, whatever seem to answer this duty upon the matter, a wrong end and bias in seeking acceptance with others will marr all, and be as a dead fly in the box which corrupts the most precious ointment; for how can they put this debt upon the Lord, when that is their reward from man.

6. *Principle, That a public spirit for God, is the best expedient for a man's own things, and to secure a private interest; and the want of this, the cause of saddest loss oft even upon that account; this we may see, Hag. i. 9; which if there were more of an observing spirit, could be under no mistake, why many sow, and bring in so little, with such personal grief, and bitter complainings at home; so sad a frustrating of the most painful endeavours by an immediate blowing thereon from heaven; Why saith the Lord of hosts, because of my house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house. One saith, shall I leave my sweetness? and others, shall I leave my fatness, to own duty in an evil time, and when visible hazard attends this? for which I may say upon the warrant of the word, many now put their most endeared interests to be as a butt of the holy jealousy and indignation of God.*

7. *Principle, It is not duty alone, but a matter of self interest, for a Christian to keep close under the authority of the word, to prevent some sadder yoke; and their being put under that discipline of the rod, which none can miss in some measure for their recovery, where mercy is in their lot; for thus does the Scripture's method lie, and the way to make a sore and afflicting burthen light that it is by bearing it, and a humble subjecting the soul thereto, with which the sensible abatement of its weight will be found, Heb. xii. 7. Jer. xxxi. 18. It is evident, how men's rods are taken out of their own sins, and that it is their wickedness is made to correct them; yea how sin and the rod grow up together, according to that, Ezek. vii. 16. where one growth may be seen for both, pride buds, and the rod blossometh.*

8. *Principle, That doing for the Lord, and a serious respect to him in it, is the surest way to prevent labouring in vain, and for enjoying long the work of their hand, Isa. lxx. 22, 23; from the want of which, what work and labour is lost, with the fore toil of many in the external duties of religion, that will never redound on their account. Oh what an amazing thing is this, were it seriously considered, to see men in such earnest about a counterfeit shew, and to appear that which they are not, which so certainly leads into a real hell, and wants not some beginning here upon the conscience, yea betrays that very end they propose to themselves within time; for the bed is shorter than that they can stretch themselves upon; and it is rare to find any get into another world, before the vail be taken off them here.*

9. *Principle, that a serious following the work of the present day, is the best way to provide for the event of the next, and for such who have but one hope, and all their dependencies on God, to have but one fear, that they go not out of the way of the promise; this we see, Psal. xxxvii. 3. Gen. xvii. 11. And is it not found by continued experience, how making haste for bringing men's design to a desired issue, gains no time of a patient waiting on the Lord? but the want thereof hath put many*

some steps backward, when they seemed to make the furthest advance.

10. *Principle, That the way of the Lord is strength to the upright*, Prov. x. 29. and is that alone which can make their feet stand on an even place when the world is reeling; this is a truth many have tried, and to this day could never bear another witness, but that it gives more in to such as closely follow it, than they could either lose, or give out on that account; yea that where men once find their hand to essay duty, though with forest wrestlings, when the Lord's going before to clear their call is known, then hath their heart and strength been remarkably found to follow.

11. *Principle, That to be interested in the blessing, is that which maketh rich*; and the most certain way for attaining such an end beyond all the devices of men's hearts which can be tried in another road. I confess the faith of such a truth seems to be little in the world, and the evidences thereof too obvious to be denied; though thus it is written, and by the faithfulness of God insured to such who will give him credit, that it is his *blessing maketh rich, and adds no sorrow therewith*, Prov. x. 22. But to acquit his way, and certainty of the truth therein, of which one tittle cannot fall to the ground; I offer these remarks with a serious appeal to the judgment and discerning of the most ordinary observers, if they do not see, 1. that there is an enjoying more in a little, yea a real possessing some have of more than others of the largest measure: Now it is sure riches can only be understood as it reacheth the end for which by all it is sought after, satisfaction to the mind; and not to have these things, but to enjoy them; without which, what is most desirable to the sense, can have no pleasant taste. 2. Is it not known such a visible income by the blessing there is, as causeth a real subserviency of the little of some for the owner's use and to go further than the great things of others, so as they are made *to abound and have no lack, whilst these who have gathered much, have nothing over*, but in the fulness of their sufficiency are in want. 3. It is sure, in no time this can be hid, how something is above the

care of the mind, or labour of men's hand; to cros of promote an outward interest, a falling in and surprisal of some providences, which from no appeatance, or the remotest tendency of outward causes could in the least be foreseen; but comes most visibly cros to the present scheme and posture of their affairs, that in one day is found to undo more than many years had set up. 4. In this I need'but appeal to men's eyes; as well as to their reason, if the pretended riches of many who unquestionably have a great share of outward things, be not a false cover under which the world may see what anxiety, trouble, fear, and most bitter complainings are, and how rare such an instance is, to whom riches is given in their hastening out of the way of the blessing; and not a large measure of sorrow added; so as it is really no such thing that most have, but a serpent instead of bread, where the sting is more sharp than the honey sweet; it is as the husk, when the substance thereof may be oft found in the house of the poor more than in theirs. Oh what a mistaken thing is this, that with such eagerness is grasped after; if there were more of the true use of reason, when it is so certainly known that something there is above outward causes to imbitter the most plentiful lot, and take the use thereof from some, and its comfortable use from others, whilst it is no less clear, the true joy and satisfaction of many in their lot, yea, what a sun-shine the blessing causeth such live under, on whom the world did never seem to smile; and what does this mean? is it not to shew the performance of that Scripture, which in no time can fall to the ground, *That the blessing of God maketh rich, and adds no sorrow therewith.*

12. I shall but add one *Principle* more of that excellent wisdom given in the Scripture; for men's being wise to themselves, by their following duty, *How it is the interest of state, and beyond all these politics, or Arcana Imperii, for its preservation, which seems most infallible to many, to seek the promoting of truth and godliness;* for if these should wear out, and go away, the land cannot possibly be safe where once they had an abode. I know, to mention this in such an age may seem

for no other advantage, but to expose these truths to the derision of such who know no interest the Bible or its rules can have in the management of state affairs, yea, look on these who are in any measure serious to live up to the truth and principles they profess, as the forest grievance of the place they live in; so sad a requital must such often meet with, who I may say, next to the long-suffering of God, are the greatest means to prevent their country's ruin; but it is sure, this same reason stands good, which *Ezra*, made use of, chap. vii. 4. if *these perish*, and the *truth be sold*, though with the greatest price of appearing advantage, and that all should hold their peace, yet could it not *countervail the king's damage*, and so inevitable a ruin to the public interest of the state which must follow thereon; for these are clear: 1. Whatever reacheth a stroke to truth and practical godliness amongst men, it doth the same to the greatest security of government, and that which founds the strongest obligations to any civil and moral duties. 2. Is it not manifest, if these wear out and be depressed in a nation, moral righteousness and truth amongst men will quickly follow, and the greatest security for all personal interest is so far gone? 3. And is it not obvious to reason, how the same essays to depress truth and practical godliness in a place, must help Atheism and a profane spirit to get up, which hath so direct and native a tendency to weaken the politic body, and emasculate the spirits of men to obstruct the vigorous improvement of natural parts, yea, most remarkably does depress and change the very *genius* of such a people. It is true in such parts where the truth of religion had not come, none will deny what singular advantage there hath been both of natural and moral endowments, as of old in *Greece*, and amongst the *Romans*. But from no records of times past could this ever be seen, that these were found with the departing of the truth from a place after its being professed and owned there; for which how sad a witness is a great part of the world this day, where it may be seen, the darkest night of barbarism and immorality hath befallen these places in a special manner, where

the light of the gospel once shined, as much of *Africa*, and where these once famous *Asiatic* churches were, does evidence. 4. Can there one instance be given, of a nation's prospering, that opposed and fought a depressing of the truth where it had once been received; but this all may see, who are serious to observe, how the most remarkable ruining strokes that have come upon a place have had some visible falling off, and withstanding of the truth to go before; then will it not be with such a people as in former times to brook that peace which had been formerly known there before the light shining amongst them? but the Scripture makes it clear that the *red and pale horse*, and he whose work is to take peace from the earth, does immediately follow a rejecting of the truth. It is known what a flood of judgments did fall in after so great a growth of *Arianism*, and that height which it came to, not only by seduction. And can it be forgot what did so immediately precede these desolating strokes on the *German* empire, which was upon so remarkable a violence and depressing of the truth in *Bohemia*, and other places there.

Seet. 5. This peculiar *Improvement* might Christians make of the present subject, with such clear discoveries of the continued verification of the words; To *have some further reach and discerning of things to come; and what yet is before the church's hand*, than what most satisfy themselves with. A truth in which is to be understood no following after secret things, which in the deep counsels of God are shut up from men; nor is it to know times and seasons, and pursue wisdom above that which is written, which were to invade his prerogative, to whom alone this belongs to know things contingent with their proper circumstances, and foresee them falling out when no possible tendency of second causes can be alledged there-to; for divine revelation is the alone rule and measure of our knowledge, and the bounds set by the Lord, beyond which there must be no more search: Yet is it clear, that a concerning use and improvement of the Scripture lies here, and some part of the Christian's work to consider the truth of its

accomplishment, as it looks forward to future events as well as for things past. We can blame ourselves only that we live not in a more clear and comfortable view of things to come, when so much advantage is for this; yea, we see how the Scripture speaks of these as already past, to witness not only the certainty of their performance, but that such a converse we should seek after by seeing them in the word, as if they were present in an actual existence before us? therefore is it thus expressed, Rev. xviii. 2. *Babylon is fallen.* But for clearing of such a duty in so dark an hour on the church, I shall lay down these three particulars to be considered. 1. What solid grounds there are to point out our way here, and let Christians see what length they might come by Scripture light, and without extraordinary revelation for a clear and comfortable discerning of some future events, which at this day are upon a certain approach. 2. This also must be taken along with the former, what restraining bounds the Lord hath set, beyond which there must be no further search. 3. I shall offer a short touch at some particulars in so very dark and astonishing a time as this, to witness how clear and refreshing a look might be had of some great things to come as if they were now present before us, by getting up to that watch-tower of a near converse with GOD in the word.

For the first, It is certain no vessel at sea keeps more exactly by the card and compass, than the church-militant does by the written word, which stands open at all times for us to consult how her course lies and keeps her way, and how well the crossiest winds fall in with her motion.

2. Though extraordinary ways of revealing God's mind are now ceased, yet are they still the same in the Scripture as to the substance thereof, to which as a great height a Christian may get up in a serious enquiry after the truth, so as not only to discern present duty, but things in their approach when at a distance, which the word is yet to bring forth, without any thing of that *Lumen Propheticum*, which in former times was known.

3. Is it not clear, how in the Scripture there is a perfect

Idea and comprehension of all these vicissitudes and changes which are to go over the church's head here, in what designs the Lord hath upon the after-ages of the world; so as thus her fate and destiny is brought to light? yea, is there not in the Scripture this day a standing record of the ancient judgments of the LORD, where men may see the copy and presidents of his providence for after-times of the church set in their sight?

4. As it cannot be denied what extraordinary discoveries some in these last times have had of future things, and remarkable exigencies of the church, whose eminent holiness and sobriety made it the more convincing to others: yet even there did the general rule of the word still go along with them, and had no new things revealed but what was contained there, tho' carried therein by a singular impulse of a Scripture-spirit, to apply the rule to particular cases and persons; but this we are not to look after, nor is there cause when so much in an ordinary way may be known by a humble, serious enquiry after the counsels of God in his word.

5. Is it not clear how *Daniel* understood by books, what yet was to come of that full accomplishment of the desolation of *Jerusalem*, and the years thereof by what he found in that prophecy of *Jeremiah*, Dan. ix. 2. where we may see him there on the same scent (whatever otherways he had of an extraordinary spirit) for discerning things to come by this sure way of setting the word and event together; for which though there needs a special irradiation of the mind, and a spirit of *wisdom and revelation*, Eph. i. 17. Yet is that such as in an ordinary way should be sought by every one of the saints: But Oh! we stand as it were upon the flat and low ground, and know little what a being more abstract and separate for such an end is, and have a near converse with God in that great study of his word and works in the world; and therefore is so little known how great a length Christians might reach in the way of ordinary gifts and means to know the deep things of God, and what lies hid from the eyes of most though written forth before us in the word.

6. That special care the Mediator hath for his church and people, that no sad trial and vicissitudes are to fall out, but the word is suited to give warning thereof before hand: nor is there such a stroke whether on a nation or a man, but the cause thereof may be clearly found in the word if there were more serious converse with it: men need not be at such work as some are in searching out the fatality and periods of kingdoms and states, to trouble themselves with the intricate numbers of *Plato*, and predictions of *Astrologers*, when so clear a response from these infallible oracles may be had, and by a serious enquiry there, comparing the word with the continued course and conduct of providence in all ages of the church, some solid ground to see that respect general denunciations of judgments to particular times, yea, from a national sinning and falling off from God, foresee the certainty of national judgments.

7. Is not such an unchangeable *series* and order of things in the Scripture as may cause a safe arguing from the causes to the effects: for though conditional threatenings be not declarative of the eternal purpose of God about the event, but are moral legislative acts; yet is it clear they express an undoubted connection betwixt sin and the punishment thereof, that at *what instant the Lord speaks against a nation and kingdom to pluck up, root out and destroy*, as we see Jer. xvii. 8. if the condition be not interposed of repentance and turning to God, then is it infallibly sure and obvious though outward appearances seemed never so cross, that such a sentence will not fall to the ground.

8. Thus also may we discern the church's rising and cure to be so far begun, as evidences of a thorough humbling work under her stroke are manifest, when such are made to *come with weeping*, and a power therewith to wrestle, who before looked as a people bound under such bonds as they could not shake off: then may we know it is a *crisis* tending to life, Jer. xiii. 19. and some previous stir and motion amongst the *dry bones* before they get to their feet.

9. There is solid ground whence at a distance it may be

seen, what manner of judgment may be feared, since the word does so particularly circumstantiate this, that *a sword shall be sent from the Lord to avenge the quarrel of his covenant*, Lev. xxvi. 25.

10. It is clear also the time and near approach of judgment, may so far be seen from the word by a discernible ripeness and height, that a people's sin is come to in some prodigious acts of wickedness; and when no access the word hath to reprove, when the judge oppresseth and *asketh for a reward*, and *the people love to have it so*, which shews the fields' becoming very white for judgment to put in the sickle.

11. Such as enquire seriously at the word, may find cause to discern the wearing out of a house and family, and of consuming strokes to come on their offspring that have been remarkably given over to the sin of uncleanness; for such a sentence is given forth from him against that sin, whose word never fell to the ground, *They shall commit whoredom, but shall not increase*, Hos. iv. 10.

12. I shall only add this, how easy it may be, to discern some humbling stroke near, and undoubtedly to follow, whether on a nation or a man, where swelling pride and insolence goes before; for this is a sure application of the general rule, Prov. xi. 2. *When pride cometh then cometh shame*. And Chap. xvi. That this goeth before destruction.

In the second place, let us consider these restricting bounds that the holy God hath set to his people's enquiries, that there be no over-stretching the rule, or a going further than the clear light of the word goes before them, which I shall here particularly touch. 1. We may pursue no *wisdom above that which is written*, nor so much as look into that ark of the hid things of God, which he hath shut up: It is sure there is large enough room and bounds in the Bible to arrest the most unsober spirit, and give them work there. 2. The sovereignty of God and an awful impression of this on the soul must still bound the Christian's furthest enquiry; since it is clear, he so walks by rule as his prerogative also takes place, which these marvellous surprisals of grace have oft witnessed in

meeting thus a people at their greatest disadvantage; for who could have inferred such a consequent from these premises, Isa. lix. 17. *For the iniquity of their covetousness I smote them, and hid myself, and they went on frowardly in the way of their heart.* Now should not judgment inevitably follow according to the rule? nay, faith the Lord, who is sovereign, and in his way infinitely above our thoughts, I'll answer all with one cure; *I have seen their ways, and will heal them.* 3. Whatever length is to be reached in the discerning future events by the word; yet here must all keep a due distance, Acts i. 7. that it is not ours ~~to know the times and seasons which~~ *the Lord hath reserved to himself*; as to any peremptory determining in such a case; though it is clear also, that with a safe warrant we may enquire about the season and near approach of Scripture-predictions, so far as previous signs thereof are by the word given for such an end. 4. It is here the Lord hath set bounds as to the way, mean, or particular circumstantiating of events beyond what is expressly written and made clear from Scripture-light. The matters of God are rolled on invisible wheels, whose motion gets oft out of our sight, and riseth so far above human reach, that men can find nothing after him so as to restrict the glorious God from one step in his way, to the same method and circumstances in another piece of his work. Thus the Scripture shews *How darkness is under his feet, and thick clouds round about*, even when he comes to deliver his people. 5. These bounds must all our enquiries have; that they be in order to duty, and lead to some practical improvement for the work of our day; for thus were the men of *Issachar*, wise to discern the times, not to answer their own humour; but that they might know what *Israel ought to do.* The prudent foreseeth the evil and hides himself; and this solid use and advantage should be looked to in discerning what the Lord is about to do; that Christians may know what to pray for or what to expect; that their heart may go alongst with these ends the Lord is now bringing forth: And is not here matter of serious exercise in a day when the hearts of the godly are so low, as their spirits seem

to fail, and be ready to say, *our bones are dried, our hope is past, and we are cut off*, Ezek. xxxvii. 7. to know what aspect the written word hath on a sinking church. I love no overstretching our hope, but it is strange there is not more improving the Scripture for our comfort against present appearances, from such clear demonstrative evidences we have there, of things to come; and what shall be *the end of these wonders*, whereon we now look with such amazement.

These things being premised, to prevent mistakes about this subject, I shall adventure in following Scripture-light with some awful regard to these bounds the Lord hath set to our enquiries here, to touch this in a few words more particularly, as not unseasonable in a time when many are at work to kindle a light unto themselves, and walk in the sparks thereof; and so woful a trade of divination hath got up in the world, that men will go to *the God of Ekron*, by seeking a divinity either in the stars above, or from the powers of darkness below, as though there were no God in *Israel*, or such a thing as his written oracles to enquire at: But *if the Lord be God let us follow him*; and if the Scripture be his undoubted word, I must say none need be in the dark about things to come; as to what is bringing forth for the church in the great event of these last times, when this blessed record is so near, which came down from heaven with a fulness of light unto men, for all that concerns them to know here, and now with so clear and certain a sound speaks.

1. From what point the church's motion unto this day lies, since Antichrist's height and reign we know is over with the great apostasy of the church expressly foretold under the new Testament; for thus by keeping sight thereof, and more near converse with the word in every step and turn of her way, it might be easy to discern though at midnight, the certainty of her course, and how exactly it keeps with the card and compass, where a full map of her journey and passage, through time is held forth; yea how far she hath got by the most hazardous part in her whole passage; and now seems near to a falling under the favourable aspect of some more

remarkable promises in her behalf; thus also is there solid ground to expect one of the greatest conjunctions that ever was known to the church, is not only to come but on some near approach, I mean of *promises* which from former ages have been sealed up, with their performance, of the prayers of the saints, that long have waited before the throne, and their full return, yea, of some very eminent providences for making these effectual.

2. This from the word, we may with clear evidence know whatever appearances seem to contradict, That *a sad hour of temptation is coming on the world*, and on these whose work hath been to trouble the church; where this clear ground is that the faithfulness of God stands good, to put *a cup of poison and trembling in the hand of her afflictors*, Isa. li. 22. 23. and cause such *wringing out the dregs of that cup the churches have drunk of*, Psal. lxxv. 8. Nor hath it ever been found that judgment began at the house of God and stayed there, or that the nations were a sore rod in his hand upon his people, but a judgment on these quickly followed, to shew forth the righteousness of the Lord in recompensing tribulation to such for what they have done; and make way by a day of vengeance for the year of his redeemed to come.

3. This we may discern from the word, by comparing the times and present state of the church therewith, that a work of judgment seems yet to go before her further rising, and these sore pangs and throws in the birth are not past, that most immediately are found to make way for approaching mercies; the *Scripture-grounds* are these. 1. The method of providence, that with every step of the church's exaltation some previous down-casting hath still kept proportion thereto: Nor is it found through the Scripture where any great thing the Lord hath done for his church, but a remarkable height of trouble hath gone before; but is here any thing strange or matter of hesitation, where the light of the word goes so clearly before; that when one of the greatest events in behalf of the church since the Messiah came into the world, until his second coming in the full destruction of

Antichrist, is in bringing forth a time of trouble and dismal darknes beyond what former ages have known go before such a brightness. 2. *ground*, Is it not too manifest such evils now follow the reformed churches, that it may be said in no time was it ever known, the Lord passing such by without some visible mark of his anger put thereon; there needs no instancing of these, where the discovery is so manifest. 3. *ground* is this, That we have seen judgment begun, but no seen fruit thereof, strokes treading on the heels of others, yet do not reclaim. And is it not a Scripture-inference, when a people will not be reformed, they lie near a further stroke, yea, is to be feared that which comes with a cure, may be very sore ere it hath done its work. *O who shall live when God does this!* Can we be in the dark after all that is seen this day what is coming, for such clear presages are at sometimes of a future event, as it may be said what *Amos* shews, chap. iii. 8. *The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?* we can discern the face of the sky; But Oh how strange is it when spiritual judgments have gone the length almost of wearing out the churches, (which must yet have a recovery) that a sound of outward judgment is not more continually in our ear! Is it time to be found lying in the hatches of the ship asleep when such unusual presages are before us. I may not in the least question where the Scripture is so clear; that great brightness which yet waits on the church; to which all her trouble must make way; and that the time of the killing of the witnesses and their prophesying in sackcloth is now past; yet there is true cause for fear of some unusually sharp and searching trial, and that *ultima clades* on the reformed church, is yet to come, that may cause much shaking where there is not a thorough establishment in the truth.

4. Whatever height the church's trouble comes at, yet have we solid ground for this, it shall not be long, nor such a lying storm as in former ages; but we know the adversary's wrath, though great, is now bounded to a short time in these latter days; and that the brightness of the light of

the gospel does much ripen the harvest, for judgment to put in the sickle: yea, though sad and very dark intervals must fall in, yet is it clear, the great work and intent of providence in this time is, to put forward the church's interest, make way for its enlargement, and bring her begun and growing victory over Antichrist to a more full period, as is insured, Rev. x. 7. chap. xii. 12.

5. It is no conjectural event; but such with greatest assurance we must believe, that there is a second rising the reformed churches shall yet have in the power and spirituality of religion; where an immediate appearance of the Lord shall be no less seen, than in that first and marvellous recovery of the purity thereof, which for many ages had been overclouded: The grounds are; 1. So remarkable an opposition as at this day is thereto in the world, over which the Mediator must prevail, and have the decision of that strife on his side. 2. If it be sure the churches shall yet recover and rise; must not the cure be where the ruin and wearing out hath been most evident: And such a blessed return of the sun, as will bring heat and love therewith, to be more answerable to their light? 3. Without this the truth of many promises yet to be fulfilled, could not be understood in the event, which so expressly point at such flourishing times of the church, as shall have a more bright and hot sun-shine of the power of the gospel, and pouring out of the Spirit therewith; so as *the name of that place shall be called Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there*, Ezek. xlviii. 35.

6. Though nothing seem more cross to outward appearances, yet is it sure, as the Lord is true, whose word is passed thereon; That whosoever have engaged their power to support the *Romish* interest, and heal that deadly wound it hath got by the gospel, shall lose the day, and find their cause desperate: for the issue of this war is determined and sure, the party with whom these contend is Jesus Christ, he who was shewed *John*, Rev. xix. 13. with his vesture dipped in blood, whose name is called the *Word of God*, and hath the armies of heaven to follow him; yea, by many degrees of wrath

hath his design already taken place; which can be under no debate, when the Lord hath begun, but that he will also make amends; and no retrograde steps are in his way, as is clearly intimated; 2 Thef. ii. 10. Rev. xiii. 10. chap. xvii. 14. Nor is there cause to be staggered in the faith of the approach of Rome's fatal period, though we should live to see *Britain* and the church's abroad on a sudden over-run by the rage of that beast; and her light eclipsed by the *Romish* darkness; but to look thereon according to the Scripture, as the *ultimus conatus* of that wounded adversary; which would be found to have an immediate connection with the ruin of Antichrist, and with the reviving and following glory of the church; for *strong is the Lord God who judgeth her*, Rev. xviii. 8.

7. This also on solid ground from the word, we are called to believe, that no new assault by Antichrist and his followers can be this day against the church, but must help to put her interest forward, and be for the furtherance of the gospel; since it is clear that by a continued war betwixt the Lamb and Antichrist, is every step of the church's rise advanced; which were it seriously considered, the most formidable appearances of trouble from that party, should with more comfort than fear be looked on. Yea, is not here from the Lord some part of his people's mercy, that they go not out in haste, nor get a hasty delivery, but such as one step thereof may still fit and dispose for another.

8. It can be no conjectural event, where the Scripture is so clear, of some very immediate appearance of the Lord, by making bare his arm against his adversary; that will be such as hath not been seen in former deliveries of the church, since the day he made his power known at the Red sea; for thus in Scripture is it held forth as a type thereof: Therefore shall the *song of Moses* be sung; though not of *Moses* only, but of the *Lamb*, as importing something more glorious, and some greater brightness put on this, which is the most illustrious act of divine judgment, reserved to the last times, and upon the greatest adversary that ever Jesus Christ had upon the

earth. It is true, the church's help lies now hid, and in ambush, Zech. i. 8. *I saw by night, and behold a man on a red horse; and where was this? it was amongst the myrtle trees that were in the bottom, which lay not in the world's view; but then was the earth sitting still and at rest, as we see verse 11. whilst the Mediator hath his forces prepared, and is ordering and acting forth instruments for his people's delivery; but at last will make it known, that when he comes it is not too late with help.*

9. That time must assuredly come, when a remarkable stirring up, and raising of spirits shall be, to build the house of the Lord, and be subservient to his design of judgment against Antichrist; though such in which nothing of instruments shall obscure the brightness of his appearance, but bear a convincing witness thereto. It is clear, there hath been no great piece of service for the church, but some remarkable raising of instruments hath been previous thereto, see Ezra i. 5. Hag. i. 14. And for what is to come, is not the word most express, Rev. xiv. 5. That such under the Mediator's conduct are making ready, who are *chosen and faithful*; yea which must take place, that some of the kings of the earth, even such whose forefathers had given their power to uphold the *Romish* throne, shall so effectually concur to execute that judgment written against that adversary.

10. Though we are to believe, that many shall be rescued by grace from that *Romish* darkness; yet is there undoubted certainty for this, for which the word is gone out of the mouth of the Lord, that he will never have peace with that party and kingdom; and no possible treaty or reconciliation can be therewith, until the blood of the saints which they have shed be avenged; for with this adversary hath the Mediator declared war from generation to generation; who with the great *Anathema* is accursed to the second coming of the Lord; yea is judicially secluded from repentance, Rev. xvi. 9. *And they blasphemed him who had power over these plagues, and repented not.*

This also is clear, whatever present appearances now

speaking, that assuredly the day hastens, and will come, wherein the Lord shall roll away the reproach of his church before all the nations, and cause her rising and brightness answer the furthest measure of her abasement, and her enemies be found liars unto her, in their predictions as well as reproach; which, though at this day is marvellous, how it can be effectuate, the promise will make way for itself through all these difficulties.

SECT. 6. This peculiar use might Christians make of such a subject, and that certainly by the experience of the verification of the word on their souls, *to be more fixed in the truth, against error and the subtil assaults thereof*; when from a practical acquaintance with these truths which others impugn, they can with the furthest persuasion of heart put their seal to the same, and have an argument from within, which all the world cannot answer. How many scoff at assurance of salvation, the inward witness of the Spirit, yea at the doctrine of imputed righteousness, who never knew the sure and sensible effects thereof on their soul; but there the judicial rise and pedigree of error may be seen, 2. Thes. iii. 10, *Because they received not the love of the truth, &c.* It is not strange, to see what liberty some of this generation take to sport their wit and invention about the Scripture, who know not these near approaches of God there, in the verification of his word; nor how clear and convincing a witness there is from the experience of Christians, in so much, that if most within the church should deny the truth of a divine efficacious concurrence with the word, beyond what is objective and moral; those could not but put their seal thereto, yea how nature's light can be no test and measure of supernatural revelation; from what they certainly know, and have proved of the certainty of these truths, which are above all reason to comprehend, though not contrary thereto. Thus they know how little their own activity and bestirring themselves could do, without a supernatural influence; and that to will as well as to do must be given them, for which they are not sufficient of themselves. And what a sad mistake is

it of true liberty, to have this ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ an equal indifference to good and evil; can that be any begun part of the perfect liberty which is in heaven, or is that the liberty which is attained by a Christian's further growth in sanctification, that brings therewith a further distance and abhorrence of sin; yet none will deny this is a more near approach to that state of the saints above, where alone true and perfect liberty is. Thus from sure experience also, Christians can witness against these who deny a standing ministry, and revile so divine an ordinance, (which is one of the most peculiar engines of the devil, he makes use of against the truth,) that they know Christ's speaking in them, and working by them with a most discernible authority and power in the serious following their master's work; yea how by the doctrine of the church, which meets with so much contradiction every where; they can assuredly say they *received the Spirit*, and know it to be the Spirit of holiness, which does in all correspond with the written word.

Seet. 7. This special *improvement* may be obvious, which the present subject, were it rightly considered, leads necessarily into, to *have our spirits thus fixed in a more full assurance of the doctrine and principles of the reformed church*, as they stand in opposition to Popery; upon these grounds.

1. That it is so evident, what most effectually tends to clear up the truth and *divinity of the Scripture*; does inevitably strike at the root and foundation of that interest; since this cannot be in the dark except we quit the use of reason, That the greatest controversy betwixt us and the *Romish* church, where the true state of the question lies, is here, if the Scripture contained in the Old and New Testament be of divine authority; or whether it and the *Romish* Bible, which is tradition, and the infallible dictates of their church, be the rule and foundation of faith? according to which decision it is most clear, their cause stands or falls; which is in effect upon the greatest head of Atheism, for if the Scripture be not the sufficient and sure *basis* of the Christian faith, all may see it can have none, whatever is alledged, but what is from

reason demonstrable to be a notorious falsehood, and the Christian cause lost. I know this may seem too great a challenge, whilst they do not professedly disown that divine record; but what a mock homage is here? And is it not thus worse used, with a more insufferable indignity put thereon, than the most avowed Atheists could do; to put out its eyes as the *Philistines* did *Sampson's*, and then bring it forth to make sport before the world, which is indeed their greatest enemy, and plague; though they are not aware, that it will undo their mirth, and at last pull down the house above them. Can the truth of this be denied? Yea, how with the highest contempt and derision they deal with the Scripture; as such who would take a sovereign judge, whose authority used to be venerable to all, and put a servant upon the bench above him; whilst he must not only sit in a lower place, but have it declared to the world, that none regard what he says, since to them he can speak no intelligible sense; nor hath any decisive power, or authority more than the meanest of the people, but what is from them alone: now, is not this to declare him no judge, but a dead image set up for sport, with much more indignity than to thrust him out of doors. I confess they have taken a sure way to end all disputes, nor needs any more contending about particular truths of the word, or to cite its authority; when these are their known and professed principles. 1. That the church of *Rome* can make that Scripture, and to be authoritatively binding to their conscience, which was never writ in the *Old* and *New Testament*? so as they have such a large ground to go upon; that nothing possible can put them to a strait. 2. That the Scripture itself hath no decisive voice, until theirs precede; nor any authority, but what is precarious, and dependent on them. 3. That to go in unto this blessed record, and seek the counsel of God there, is but to consult a mass of dead unsensed characters; that can have no intelligible sound, nor articulate voice, until the Romish clergy cause it speak, and put a sense thereon: And thus is the letter of the Scripture undeniably passed from, and no other Bible but their sense and meaning.

1. That there is no founding the Christian faith on any certainty of divine truth in the Scripture, nor on that ground, *Thus saith the Lord*: But, Thus do their church say, and the Pope as supreme head thereof. 5. That the very being of God, the death and resurrection of Christ, must have a dependence on the church ere they can be articles of our faith, and be believed. It is sure, there is no access to deny that these are Romish principles, which they must either own or impeach their greatest writers of falsehood, who so expressly maintain the same; but if these hold, it may then be said their work is done, and are got out of all possible reach of Protestant arguments, with this one answer, You have no Bible, or any thing to prove your religion, but what you must have from us: so as the great work of the reformed churches this day is to appear for the truth of Christianity, and that such an authentic, and sacred instrument of truth, certainly is, whereon it is founded.

2. This *advantage* is for being more thoroughly fixed in the truth against Popery, from these clear discoveries of the Scripture's accomplishment, and what near converse is to be had therewith by experience; That thus it is sure, the Scripture can be known with the greatest certainty of evidence to be the word of God, without all dependence on the church: Which makes void one of their greatest fundamentals, that none can be assured thereof, but by the church's testimony. It cannot be denied, that the whole frame and structure of the Romish church; with what appearance it hath this day, is a singular help to confirm the truth, where all may see these prophecies that concern the Antichrist, under the *New Testament* so visibly fulfilled: But I hope that gives no ground for a necessity on us to take the truth of the Scripture implicitly off their hand; and I am sure there is none else.

3. This *advantage* there is from the present subject, for being more solidly fixed in the truth against Popery; That we can thus know, and keep sight of the state of the reformed church, and the whole *series* of providence about her in the most remarkable changes she hath been under; both dur-

ing Antichrist's, and since she began her rise: where it is so evident, how exactly all answers to the word, and that her case hath not been more low, afflicted, and latent, than is there held forth; and how certainly the Lord hath performed his truth, in what length hitherto his work about her hath come.

4. Is it not thus, by the clear evidence of the Scripture's accomplishment, and a serious converse therewith, we may see the certainty of Antichristianism in the world (which as an event of the word behoved to take place under the *New Testament*) how convincingly it is verified in the doctrine of the Romish church; such as all who are in earnest so far as to compare this with the written word, may know how not only different from the truth of Christianity revealed there it is, but most visibly destructive thereto; as this day hath been fully cleared before the world by the labours of such, who since the breaking up of the light, were helped of the Lord to contend against their adversary.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

THE
FULFILLING
OF THE
SCRIPTURE.
PART III.

SCRIPTURE TRUTH
CONFIRMED & CLEARED,
BY SOME GREAT APPEARANCES OF GOD FOR HIS CHURCH
UNDER THE
NEW TESTAMENT,
HELD FORTH:
WITH SOME SPECIAL REMARKS THEREON.
FROM HER FIRST RISE AND PLANTING AMONG THE NATIONS, AND THAT
BLESSED RECOVERY OF LATE FROM ANTICHRISTIAN
DARKNESS, EVEN TO THESE TIMES.

By ROBERT FLEMING,
LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT CAMBUSLANG.

According to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What hath
God wrought? Numb. xxiii. 23.
That his name is near, his wondrous works declare. Psal. lxxv. 1.
Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true
are thy ways, thou King of Saints. Rev. xv. 3.

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TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

READER,

THEY are well, and at a blessed advantage in such trying and winnowing times we are fallen in, whose great study is to make peace with God, and understand their way where it lies, and upon what security they adventure, when dark clouds are so remarkably casting up, and all sensible grounds almost shaken, so as the life of faith seems now in another manner the Christian's trial, how to be at rest and fully quiet upon the truth and faithfulness of God, I must say than in any former days, that we, or our fathers have known, since the begun rise, and recovery of the church from Antichristianism; and should not this lie near, as the greatest interest men can have to be taken up with, that their anchor is sure, and cast within the vail, and to know whom they have believed, when the jealousy of a highly provoked God is now ready to burst forth, and great wrath seems to be on this generation; when a strong and hot battle may be looked for to be yet before the reformed churches, and very near; yea such times, when there may be *no peace to him that goes out and comes in*: But to these, these only, whose peace is above all such storms, as knowing the rock they found on is God, that the great things of the everlasting gospel are assuredly true, and the testimony of the word, whereon he hath *caused them to hope* to be such, as can make it sweet and easy to roll the whole of their interest thereon, not only for what doth concern them within time, but an eternity of glory to come, with some respect to this, and I may say, under some weight of this *subject*, is this small treatise offered to your serious perusal, being a brief touch of these *great and marvellous things, which the Lord hath done for his church under the New Testament*; O that with a blessing from him therewith, it might be a *word in season* to any, and a helper to their joy, and strengthening in the truth.

It is clear, that the works of the Lord and these marvellous things he did in the sight of our fathers for confirming the truth, is a weighty talent and trust, we stand this day accountable for. 1. For being more strengthened in his way, since it is there, *his name is near*. 2. To observe, and make a diligent search thereanent for they are great, and sought out of all that take pleasure therein, Psal. cxi. 2. Yea whilst we are under so pressing a call thus to come, and see the Lord's being God; *whose work is honourable and glorious, and his righteousness endureth for ever*, ver. 3. 3. To keep up the remembrance thereof, that *one generation may praise his works to another*, and not lose sight of the great wonders of former ages, and those events of providence about the church, so famous, public; and of such unanswerable evidence though now many generations past, as even to this day might be, as if they were present in our sight, and a continued wonder before us. Yea I must say, it seems to be a peculiar guilt, and controversy, which the holy God hath with the present generation, when there is no suitableness regarding his works, nor calling to mind his power and judgments of old, but so visible a tempting of him upon every new step of our trial. 4. And should not this cause a further weight and impression of such a duty on us, *that we may give unto the Lord the glory of his works*, and wonders done in times past, and for putting to our seal to that glorious administration of providence under the Mediator's hand, about his church under the gospel, who alone was found worthy to loose that *sealed book*, and *hath done all things well*; that his work is perfect, and in a great part now brought forth in the event before our eyes; with such marvellous things, which in their appointed time and season have been made known, as should never have entered into men's thoughts, if they had not been foretold in the Scripture; so as a greater trust now falleth under our hand, than to those who lived in former ages. O how sweet should a serious aim at this be, for each in their several capacities to be thus concerned, how to advance the repute and credit of the truth of Christ; and make known to

the sons of men *his mighty acts and the glorious majesty of his kingdom under the New Testament.*

Though the church's state and condition, since that blessed restoration after the fall hath been still militant upon the earth, yet we may see the *cross* with some further measure of sharp and searching trials have a more peculiar respect to the dispensation of the gospel, and remarkably suited thereto, to go through much *tribulation*, than it was to those times under the *law*; yea, thus some astonishing, and more continued assaults, than was known to the ancient church, as consentaneous to a greater manifestation of grace, and higher degree of light. But here also how sweet and confirming a prospect may we have of the way of the Lord, which this present essay does point at, I hope with some clearness. 1. That neither *Greece* nor *Rome* whose conquests were once spread through most of the *nations*, did ever know such triumphs as the truth and doctrine of Christ hath had in those times of the greatest sufferings and persecution, both over the Pagan and Antichristian world, over the thrones of kingdoms, as well as the meanest cottages; yea, how this hath made the earth to tremble, and the nations shake in their day. 2. What rare examples of holiness, and of the marvellous power of the truth (yea, these not a few, but innumerable) we thus have in our sight, who did both burn and shine (tho' with borrowed light from their blessed head) and with so bright a lustre in the darkest night of the church's sufferings, as all might see the *Spirit of God and of glory did rest upon them*; yea, thus may have a more convincing view of the glory of the church militant, if they would but come near, and consider this strange sight, what hath been her state under the gospel, *the bush burning and not consumed*; and what was said of Joseph in the type, *how his bow did abide in strength*, amidst such amazing and renewed conflicts. 3. That the recovery of Christianity from Antichristian darkness is such, as hath no less demonstrative evidence of the immediate power of God, and his outstretched arm, yea, most astonishing signs and witnesses of an extraordinary providence therewith, than

the first spreading thereof amongst the nations. And though it is not now a time of miracles in that manner, as in the days of the apostles, yet hath these been times of the great wonders of the gospel, as in many instances may be convincingly evident if men do not shut their eyes thereat.

For what passages are here insert, I may with confidence say, there hath been some serious enquiry made, and a being not easily satisfied anent the certainty thereof, from the gravest both of *ancient* and *modern histories*, and to have such evidences of their truth as might be to the furthest convincing, to one who was under some pressure on his own spirit for a clear quieting persuasion hereof, no less than to satisfy others. O what it is to be persuaded of the reality of the gospel, to know and be sure, that when this *earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building in heaven eternal, that is not made with hands*, since to be a Christian in earnest, and have an aim to follow the Lord fully now in such remarkable dark and searching times? does indispensibly call for some higher degrees of assurance and establishment, than seems by most to be understood; it is not easy sometimes for the most established to be kept from fainting in the way to their country, such may be the pressure of affliction, and multiplied temptations, and so dark an hour on their soul, to bring in question, what with great assurance they once knew, and with humble confidence could bring in before the Lord, as his own seal; yea, a few days may come in the church's way, more remarkable for trial, than almost an age before. It is sure the furthest length in being confirmed in the way of the Lord, was never more pressingly called for; yet how rare a sight seems this to be in the days we live in. Some things may seem strange, which I have been put to think on with astonishment. 1. That the measure of light, and these confirmations of the truth given in to this generation, doth so far exceed the measure of former times, yet seems it to be the peculiar assault suited to this age, wherein the power of darkness does most appear, *that prodigy of Atheism*; yea, how far many have lost all persuasion of the truth, and make it their work

to resolve their faith in an uncertainty of any principles: 2. That judicial tendency the light and knowledge of most now seem to have, for a further deadening of their conscience, and where its true and native fruit should be to humble and abase, how rare this is, but to the contrary effect, to swell and puff up, and what an ordinary way of converse have most learned, with the greatest truths of the Scripture, as if there were no more but to make these a sport of wit and invention, in their debates thereanent, which could not be possibly consistent with an awful regard, and persuasion of its being the word of the living God, or their souls being under the the power and authority thereof; yea, none more found beyond the reach of conviction, and the awe of light further off their conscience, than many who have been once enlightened. 3. How men should live at such distance with these great things that are so shortly to come to pass, as an *eternal state, and resurrection of the dead*, which could not but enforce some converse therewith in another manner, to have them more present and as still in our sight, if they were truly believed. Oh! if Christians were such a length in their being confirmed in the truth, which they are called to seek after, the greatest strait and trial even in times of heaviness otherwise, than would be to bear their joy and comfort, which that marvellous change they shall ere long know and enjoy of an eternal glory could not but cause. 4. And can serious godliness be conceivable in its exercise, without deep and solid impressions of the certainty of divine truth, when this so necessarily conjoined with a being kept in the love of God, and under a blessed constraint thereof; thus a resignation of their whole interests to him, is made sweet and easy, so as to know they can never make so much of any worldly enjoyment, as by an offering up, and resigning it to his blessed call. Yea, is thus made comforting to endure, and though *hope deferred may make the heart sick*, yet are they then kept unshaken with such a quieting assurance of the truth, that though it pleaseth us best, when the returns of prayer make haste; yet since they know it gives more glory to God, when he

delays most, to have a sweet complacency therewith: If *Job's* trial had been sooner at a close, it might have been more his personal ease, but not more for the Lords honour; no mercy hath ever been more endeared, than what hath broke out of the midst of the thickest cloud, or more full and sweet, than what hath come after much patience and continued wrestlings.

I must further add, as to some peculiar improvement of these passages here recorded, how a serious reader may find these truths both confirming and sweet, which convincingly are presented before him. 1. That the most rare experiences of the faints, and their sharpest trials have so usually met, and these the sweetest dispensations, which would have been most cross to their own choice; yea, have seemed most judgment-like to ordinary observers. 2. That it is sure there are discoveries of the truth known to the faints in times of suffering, which are inconceivable to any at a distance. O how the world would wonder, if they understood what these knew, and have been then admitted to enjoy. 3. How the continuance and preservation of the church in all the times of the gospel is such, as is peculiar to her alone, and can be said of no interest or party else; which hath borne out such great revolutions, as have most changed the face of the world; and these almost universal deluges of *Paganism*, *Arianism*, and *Antichristianism*, which like an inundation did for a time go over her head. 4. Tho' the dispensations of the Lord have a wonderful deepness, and but a little thereof can be reached, whilst sin and mortality stand in the way; yet we may see here, how *patience* can make an out-gate break up before a deliverance, and tribulation for the gospel to be one of the faints privileges, which hath a peculiar rent and interest lying to it; that such have griefs and comforts the world is a stranger to; yea, how that measure of trial, grief or pain did meet none of his people in his way, which the Spirit of the Lord hath not made easy to endure, and to be comforted therein. 5. How such hath been the ease and pressure oft of the faints under their sufferings, as may demonstratively witness, it must be some strong consolation, and no shadow that could thus

support them, under the same, when no visible cause was for it. 6. That when the Lord calls his own quickly away, there is some discernible growth then usually previous thereto, and a reaping of an early harvest may be seen. 7. That it is not by might and power but an immediate out-pouring of the Spirit, which can in a few years bring more forward, than many ages could undo; as in that blessed recovery of the church from popery might be convincing to all. 8. And have we not here a demonstrative witness of the reality of that state above, whither such a blessed company are entered, and knows now what it is to be there, when the fore-thoughts thereof, and these sensible glaces they got of that land whither they were going, was such, as swallowed up these impressions, that their imbittering pain and torments could not but have left on them; O what they now enjoy, and what change is a Christian to undergo when death comes, as it should not be strange though these long to be gone to that inconceivable, sweet and delightful paradise, which is above, who ever knew in themselves the truth thereof sealed by the earnest of the Spirit. 9. It is thus we see, how the Lord hath made good his word to the church, in a most strange and wonderful way; so as nothing hitherto hath failed of the prophecies of the New Testament, but may be now read in the event; yea, these things brought forth in their appointed time and proper circumstances, as they were expressly foretold; when no influence of second causes in the remotest tendency thereto, could possibly be discerned; such as the greatest Atheists may see, hath not come to pass at an adventure, or in an ordinary way of providence.

I judged it duty (and hope it may not be found unseasonable) to give some brief touch also at the present state of the church of Christ in *Scotland*; and to bear witness to so great and weighty an interest on which the sufferings of his people there are remarkably stated at this day; having been surprised to have found how little this was understood by many, who want not otherwise a serious respect to the truth, and desire to be concerned in the church's case there.

Though extraordinary and immediate revelations must not now be looked after, but the Lord's fixed and established way under the times of the gospel, to communicate light and give answers to his people, is by these living oracles of the Scripture, and that it is sure the truth and authority of God there, is the alone formal object of his people's faith; yet it cannot be denied, nor be strange, that he hath been pleased to reveal unto some of his servants, even in these late times in a more extraordinary way, things that were to come; especially in a suffering condition, and when some special service and necessity of the church did the more call for it. If an angel from heaven, much more men, should bring any light or discovery of things contrary to the Scripture, or offer to add any thing to that perfect rule; they were to be accursed. But what in some singular passages here insert, as I have elsewhere upon such account endeavoured to clear; we may see how these great servants of Christ were led in no other path than that of the written word, though they had some more extraordinary and immediate imbreathings of God's mind, as to the application thereof in particular cases, and with respect to that part of the church where they lived, which also with greatest caution, and much humble sobriety they did own. Nor is it strange, that such confirmations from the Lord given in to some of his servants are so rare now, whilst the ancient holiness of these days is so little known, and what it is to believe, and follow the Lord fully, with close keeping by light, which these made their continued study.

I have aimed as far as the expressing the matter with some plainness could possibly admit, to prevent unnecessary multiplying of words, or encroach on your time that way, and I hope, the subject being so grave and weighty may oblige the reader to some serious entertaining thereof. It is a great thing to discern the work of God aright, and what a marvellous seal is in every age given to the truth, to see how all these lines of providence, and most astonishing revolutions which have gone over the church, do so convincingly lead into the Scripture, and to the Christian's further establishment,

THE
FULFILLING
OF THE
SCRIPTURE.

CHAP. I.

THE GREAT APPEARANCES OF GOD FOR HIS CHURCH, UNDER
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

SECTION I.

IT is undeniable, that we must either cease to exercise reason or confess the greatest interest men have to be most taken up with here, the greatest event that ever was brought forth within time, is what is delivered to us in the gospel, in that wonderful history by the four evangelists of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ: That such a time assuredly was, and now many ages since past, when the glorious Redeemer of the church, the second person of the Godhead, came down from heaven, and was revealed to the world in our nature, about which the *Old Testament* and prophecies thereof, had until then been travailing still as in birth; yea, with most clear and undeniable evidence did answer that season, which was expressly pointed at by the Scripture, and in that time when the ancient church was with greatest longing and advertance looking for his appearance, which they knew could not be but very near.

Sect. 2. But such is this great subject of the gospel, and of that import, as nothing seems to bring it more in question, than that the Christian world is not in another manner this

day affected therewith, or can own a professed assent, without more serious returning on themselves in such an enquiry, if they can truly credit their own eyes herewith, yea, how Christians indeed should be persuaded of its truth and certainty, and yet find it so easy to bear that joy, which this should cause within their soul, so as to awake in the morning, and lie down at night, without being in a more frequent transport of wondering, *to know what great things thus they are called to know, and converse with*, when these thoughts are brought near to us. 1. What man's estate should be here upon the earth, if it were divided from the hope of the gospel, and the necessity thus of a Mediator, on whom the sin of the elect church might be by imputation transferred; since out of Jesus Christ, God is not to be found, but as a consuming fire. 2. That it is sure, God hath been manifested in the flesh, and the Redeemer of the church is no more to come, but hath come already. 3. To know how great that end was, to which the greatest design, that ever the glorious God brought to light, in sending his own Son into the world, could answer; which, next to his own declarative glory, was to restore this rare work and frame of man, by a new creation; to condemn sin, that he might save sinners; to repair those ruins and breaches sin had made, for which angels nor men could never have known a cure. 4. That thus our nature should be so highly advanced and exalted, as in the incarnation of Christ, to be assumed into that near conjunction and union with the divine nature. 5. That it was not acquittance and absolution only, from eternal wrath, that is brought to light, and insured by the gospel; but such a real change also, as hath therewith a being made meet, by a new and spiritual nature formed within, for that blessed state which is above. That it is so very short and uncertain a time, until these eyes of ours be shut on this lower world, and all things that are here, and when this earth must cease for ever to be the place of our abode, and we to return to it no more. 7. For such, to know, and bring near their thoughts, over whom many sad days and hours have gone, that no less than a hea-

ven and an eternal glory is before them; yea, such a marvellous, and unspeakably astonishing change shall once be in their state, from what they now are, so as to be equal to the angels of God, to shine forth as the sun in their Father's kingdom; when they shall draw in no other air, than the breathings of that higher paradise, and there, in that blessed land, be everlastingly ravished with the fulness of joy, and those pleasures for ever more, which are in his presence; yea, that thus the most poor, and despicable amongst men, hath a prize set in his view to contend for, inconceivably greater than all the crowns and kingdoms of the earth. What thoughts are these that could not but follow on the believed truth and certainty of the gospel? and, who would not thus endure and watch, who knew such a change shall quickly be, of being entered into that state of glory? I suppose, that such a proposal as this were made to any, to endure the forest outward pain, or lie in a dark prison in an afflicted and destitute state, to conflict with much outward tribulation, for some twenty, or thirty, or forty years, and after, to have insured his being made king over the most flourishing kingdom, which is this day in the earth, and enjoy the same for many ages without the least change; who would debate such a choice? Yet here is no possible shadow or resemblance to that blessed hope, which the meanest Christian hath set before him. 8. Such also is the import of the truth of the gospel, as not only insures that state of glory above, but an eternity therewith. *Lastly*, That it was infinite love and distinguishing grace hath caused such a difference betwixt those, who shall once dwell there, and that innumerable multitude adjudged to everlasting torment.

Seet. 3. Though such is the concernment of the gospel of Christ, as is no less than our being blessed here and for ever, yet we cannot but see it is no greater than that *security and fulness of evidence*, wherewith this day it is conveyed and made known, when it is so clear, 1. That this could never have possibly entered into the thoughts of men, or been-devised, but passeth all natural understanding to know

or comprehend in the least, if it had not been revealed to us in the Scripture, nor could human knowledge have ever foreseen upon any principles of reason its taking place. 2. Was a truth, which then took men's minds most up, as being the greatest transaction, which ever was on the earth, yea thus not only to look on at a distance, as most do on the strange emergents of the time, but that which lay near, as their own personal interest, wherein their state and being for all eternity, they knew was concerned. 3. A truth, which is by length of time still more confirmed, with a visible attestation of its power and marvellous effects; now through these sixteen centuries, conveyed to us; as the greatest. Atheists know not, though at this distance of time, how to contradict the certainty thereof, but by shutting their eyes; yea visibly enforced oft to bewray some tremblings of heart within, to dare a disowning of that, which yet is their greatest torment. 4 A truth, which in all ages required no reception in the world, but on men's exactest search and trial thereanent, with a public appeal, not to their light and judgment only, but experience. 5. A truth, whose known adversaries are such alone, as never knew it upon trial; and those in all ages most firm witnesses thereto, whose acquaintance hath been on the nearest approach, and hath had most familiar converse therewith, yea such, who with greatest joy hath sealed the truth of the gospel with their blood, because they knew it assuredly to be true; which is a weighty and strengthening remark, how the most experienced Christians, who have the nearest fellowship with the gospel, are those, and those alone, who have the greatest assurances thereof. 6. A truth, whose record is not more clear and legible in the Testimony of both *Old and New Testament*, than it is upon the hearts, and lives of innumerable witnesses thereto, since the first times of the gospel, upon whom it hath been turned into a practical history, in the truth and vitals of a new life, and in their being visibly changed into the very same image. 7. A truth, about which all divided parties of the Christian world, who were otherwise at greatest distance among themselves,

have been enforced to be one in their consent here; yea the *Jewish* as well as the Christian writers, to bear the same witness, for the matter of fact. 8. Such a truth, as could but once take place, and no possibility of its being re-acted ever again; to which its express time and bounds was set by the promise of God for many ages before the event, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12. *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you.* Which then could not be in the dark to the *Jewish* church, that his blessed coming was at hand, when such clear grounds were given for a right computation and understanding thereof, both from *Jacob's* prophecy of the sceptre's departure from *Judah*, from *Daniel's* weeks, with those great revolutions of the monarchies, which had then so evident an accomplishment in the event, and as high-way marks were for this end set forth in that prophecy; and, whilst they knew certainly the extent of those weeks could only be weeks of years, that surely the last period thereof was then drawing near, about that very time of Christ's appearance. 9. A truth not wrapt up in some general account, but such as, both in the prophecies and event, is delivered with most clear and express circumstances, so equal and congruous to themselves in the whole relation thereof, as nothing can be more convincing. 10. Such is this greatest truth of the gospel, where all may see one aim and scope in the whole of that history, without intermixing any thing that hath not some evident congruity thereto; yea, though different penmen, and those at so great a distance of time, yet here are both the *Old* and *New Testament* so closely connected, and meet in one blessed point and centre, that, to divide these from Jesus Christ, the whole work and frame thereof should be dissolved. 11. A truth, which none of the Gentiles could receive

and own, but by quitting that religion they were bred, and educate in, and of so long a time, transmitted from their fathers; which was such a religion, as put no restraint upon following the lusts and pleasures of the flesh; yea, thus to abandon the same, where no private interest or advantage, no visible incitement from any other airth, besides the power and certainty of the truth itself on their soul, could possibly be known to influence such a change. 12. A truth, which, with no human confidence or assistance, did then confront the world in its greatest strength, without the least flattering of any, nor did ever lose ground by the greatest opposition. 13. Which was no transient glance to the world: not for some days or months only, but a continued time of several years, did our blessed Redeemer visibly converse here upon the earth; yea, to confirm our faith the more in his being truly man, did go through all those degrees of childhood, and infancy; and in that same ordinary way grow up to the full stature of man, to shew his being *made like unto us in all things, excepting sin*, and that he did truly *partake of flesh and blood with his children*. 14. To confirm the certainty of this blessed truth, is it not also undeniable, that the *Jewish* and *Pagan* adversaries did not for so many ages conflict and wrestle with their own shadow, in opposing the Christian faith, but what to their torment they found to be in greatest earnest: Nor was it a comedy, or personated suffering, which the first publishers of the gospel did undergo, but what was assuredly real; yea, that pain and hardship they endured in their confessing of Jesus Christ, and owning his truth, was no dream or illusion, either to themselves, or the world; and what could have been to make the shadow and appearance of being Christians at such a rate desirable, no human understanding can reach. 15. And, is it not clear that Christianity is the very ornament and perfection of our nature, and in some begun degrees, even here, doth restore us to that right and dominion over the flesh, which was once lost, to a transforming from the condition of beasts, unto that of men; yea, as love to the world doth visibly assimilate the spirits of men

unto the same image, so as the more near approach to the flesh, the further separate from God; and as the soul is defiled, and turns earthly, in the same measure is it darkened and alienate from the life of God. There is nothing more clear also, than this, how the love of Christ, which hath its alone rise from him, doth, by a blessed constraint, carry the soul with its furthest consent to him again, to imbofom itself there, until it be wholly unite with its own element; and this with as native a tendency, as the sparks fly upward. 16.

Can it be in another manner the *Jews* could expect their *Messiahs*, than in that way our blessed Redeemer came, except they bring some other authority than the *Old Testament* for it, and terminate their desires herein, for having one to fill their belly, and please the flesh? Or, can these own either Scripture or reason, and not see how far all earthly grandeur is below that inward beauty of the soul, and lively illumination thereof, with the knowledge of God, the hope of that glory which is to come, and begun victory over the flesh and lusts thereof; except they own a preference of the body to the soul, and the pleasures of the beasts, to these of angels?

17. Such is this truth, as could not possibly, without making void the faithfulness of God, have taken place in another time, or in the succeeding ages, when once the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, with the scattering of the *Jewish* nation, was accomplished. I shall but here further add, that such is the truth of the gospel, as nothing could have been more cross to human reason, more obstructive of its success, or have caused a greater stumbling to the dark world, than the delivery and publishing thereof, with those circumstances recorded in the history of the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, with that ignominy which attended the same, his low estate, and being rejected of his own people; if there had been possible access for consulting with flesh and blood, or to walk by rules of human wisdom herein; yea, any ground else to lean on, than the certainty of its own truth, and that assuredly this should be the power and wisdom of God, to such as were ordained to life. O blessed,

bleſſed truth on which ſo great an intereſt leans, and ſo rare a ſtructure and workmanſhip hath been founded, as the Chriſtian church even to this day! there is enough to answer all, when human comforts do moſt fail, and to countervail the griefs and ſorrows of a ſad time!

ſect. 4. We ſee that time of the coming of the *Meſſiahs*, at ſuch a ſignal period, and *crifis* in the condition then of the world, as ſhould be gravely obſerved. 1. Under *Auguſtus* reign when the temple of *Janus* was ſhut, becauſe of an univerſal peace, that thus with more ſerious advertance the world might regard ſo great a thing, as could not but be aſtoniſhing, with thoſe circumſtances that followed thereon, to moſt of the nations about, which then were not prejudged with the noiſe of tumults or war, from being reached with this great diſcovery. 2. At ſuch a time did this bleſſed healer come, and made firſt offer of himſelf to the *Jewiſh* nation, when its condition was in that meaſure deplorable, as it ſeemed to be almoſt paſt cure: and it is clear from the ancient *Rabbies*, and their own *Talmud*, how ſuch a reckoning they did then make, for a moſt ſad and dark time when the *Meſſiahs* ſhould firſt appear. 3. Such alſo was that bleſſed time of his being revealed to the Gentiles, when nothing could have been more repugnant to ſuch times, than the doctrine of Chriſt and the croſs, without the convey of an extraordinary divine power, when, after ſo great univerſal peace, the *Roman* empire, with the nations about, were moſt remarkably drowned in all luxury and voluptuouſneſs, beyond the rate of former ages. 4. It was then the Redeemer came, and brought life and immortality to light unto the dark nations, *when the world through wiſdom knew not God*, but was ſtill as at a dark midnight in the knowledge of divine things; yea, after the wiſdom and learning of thoſe ages paſt had been to the furtheſt improv'd in their enquiry after truth; when the *Grecians* had conveyed what they could from the *Egyptians*, and the *Romans* from them, yet did ſtill loſe themſelves more in groping to ſeek the right door, by the dim light of nature, nor knew how they came into that eſtate, in

which they found themselves; so as all may see, 1. The utter insufficiency of natural abilities, now since the fall, to give light about divine truths, to know either what God is, or how he is to be worshipped, or the true cure and relief of such visible corruption of nature. 2. What a divinity men would frame to themselves, without supernatural revelation, whilst nothing was more absurd, and, to astonishment irrational, than that religion which was then owned in the *Roman* empire. 3. That it is the doctrine of Jesus Christ only revealed in the gospel, and his immediate concurrence therewith, could accomplish that change on the world, and the spirits of men, which no moral philosophy could ever do, to have such an irresistible prevalence over nature, custom, education, and whatever interest had formerly command over their natural disposition, which nothing but a divine power could bring about.

Sect. 5. We may see, the world was in these times no stranger to the fame and report of *Jesus Christ*; and how publicly conspicuous his appearance then, as nothing could be more known for matter of fact, was in no hid corner, but notour, famous, and undeniably manifest at *Jerusalem* before the *Romans*, at the passover, when such a confluence of strangers from other places were present at the sufferings of our Lord; yea, which in so short a time after put the world in such a flame, and, for all hath befallen that people of the *Jews*, did they never to this day once offer to deny, or disown what their fathers did herein. Some few passages I shall insert, as a witness hereto. 1. What *Josephus* hath lib. 18. cap. 45. *In the same time there was a wise man (if we may call him a man) who was a worker of miracles, and teacher of them that willingly receive the truth, and had many both Jews and Gentiles his followers, and was believed to be the Christ: And when Pilate had crucified him, through the envy of our rulers, yet those that first loved him, were constant in their affection; for he appeared to them alive the third day, as the prophets foretold both this and many wonderful things of him, from whom are the Christians so called to this very day.* Thus *Jerome*, in his book

of Ecclesiastic writers, sets down; which reading of his (*he was believed to be the Christ*) is judged preferable to that of *Eusebius* (*hic fuit Christus*) or as it is in our ordinary translations of *Josephus*: since, as *Usher* in his annals shews, *what length soever Josephus came yet he was not a directly professed Christian*. The Jews have in after-times essayed to raze this whole testimony out of their books, as *Baronius* and other writers shew; but with that disadvantage, that for so many ages before, this was public and famously extant, which their ancestors could not offer to contradict. 2. We have that honourable testimony *Josephus* also gives to *John Baptist*, lib. 18. cap. 7. whose words are, *Herod the tetrarch killed John surnamed the Baptist, a most excellent man, who stirred the Jews to the exercise of virtue, especially to the washing of baptism, which he said would be then acceptable to God; but in having their minds first purged through righteousness, they added cleanness of body thereto; and from the great resort was to him, Herod, fearing his authority might raise some rebellion, thought it safe to take him out of the way*. 3. That of *Corn. Tacit.* a most known adversary to Christians, whose words are these, *annal. 15.* speaking of the Christians, *Christianos appellavit autor ejus nominis Christus, qui Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus fuit*. Thus expressly witnessing the sufferings of the Lord to have been under *Tiberius's* reign, and at that very time whilst *Pontius Pilate* did rule in *Judea*: a relation that all may see, could be from no respect in the least to that way, but to hold forth only the truth in matter of fact, so famous and known in that time he wrote, which was almost in the very same age with the apostles. 4. Thus *Macrobius* also relates, *Saturn, lib. 2. cap. 4.* When *Augustus* heard, how *Herod* among the children he caused kill of the Jews within two years old, that a son of his was killed also, he said, it was better to be *Herod's* hog than his son. 5. Both *Ruffinus* and *Eusebius* do appeal the Heathen to their own annals; that in *Pilate's* time when Christ suffered, the sun did withdraw, and darkness ensued, which was then extant in the *Roman's* records in their time. *Euseb. lib. 9. cap.*

6. And *Tertullian Apol. ad gentes*, cap. 21. shews, how then the day was withdrawn, whilst the sun was at the height; which those, who knew not that it concerned Christ, judged to be only an eclipse; yet saith he, *Ye find this recorded in your own monuments.* Yea, *Thallas* a Heathen writer, and *Fleg. Tral.* lib. 13. *Chron.* a Heathen also, are both cited on the same account, the one by *Sulius Africanus* in the 3. of his *Chronology*; the other by *Oregon* against *Celsus*, page 83. as *Usher* in his *annals* shews.

SecT. 6. It was with the first dawns of the Christian Church, that stupendous and great seal was then put to the truth, by the gift of tongues and different languages; which, besides that infallible authority of the Scripture, is, with such undeniable evidence to this day, demonstrable on grounds of reason, as can leave no possible access to debate the same; where it is clear, 1. That then was the time come for all nations to know the gospel, and when that wall of partition was to be taken down. 2. That the commission and authority given to the apostles and evangelists of Christ, for their work and ministry, was of no less extent than to the whole world, with an express promise of this marvellous gift; as is clear both from the last of *Matt.* and *Mark.* 3. That the delivery over of the doctrine of the gospel; to the nations, had then an undoubted necessity hereof, not as a confirming sign and miracle only, to attest the truth of the gospel, but, as an instrumental means, for making the design thereof effectual, whilst these different languages put so evident a let to their work, or any successful pursuance of it, without such an extraordinary mean. 4. It is sure, that in no ordinary way without such a miracle, could ever the Christian faith have in that manner spread, and come to the most dark places of the earth, by those instruments who were chosen and made use of for the same; such as, some poor fishermen and publicans, who were known to be rude and unlettered, even to the conviction of the *Jews*; yea, when it is evident, their furthest reach could only have been, to know their vulgar language, which then was the *Syriack*. 5. Should not those

undoubted and marvellous effects, which followed thereon, infer the conviction of so extraordinary a mean, when, in less than 40 years after the first publishing of the gospel, such famous churches were planted in the most dark and remote parts of the world, as all ancient records witness: so that we cannot more wonder to read such a stupendous thing, as the gift of languages was at that time, than we should to know how possibly, without this, such an early and universal spreading of the Christian church, could have been through the world. 6. Is it not clear, how this great miracle is of another manner than others then wrought to confirm the truth, that it was not in some one place witnessed, where those only present could have access, but was notour and public in those churches, where the Christian faith was first planted by the apostles; so as the very being of the Christian church could not be more obvious, than the truth of this in those times? 7. If such a matter of fact could have been possibly gain-said, would the *Jews* then have been wanting, who so much sought to strengthen their prejudice against the gospel, to appear in an open contradiction thereto, when the account given hereof was made public and known to all? 8. It is thus evident, how the Scripture of the New Testament, not upon the matter only, but the very language wherein most of the penmen thereof wrote, was in an extraordinary way given them from heaven: nor can it be judged, that to such as *Peter*, *James* and *John*, who were fisher-men, and *Matthew* who was of the meanest of the people; the *Greek* language could have been so familiar, which was not their own vulgar tongue, as to write therein. 9. Thus also may be seen, that which was a stroke and judgment once, in the first dividing and confusion of tongues, made so remarkable a blessing for the spreading of the gospel; the one suited to that time of the church's inclosure from the rest of the earth, and as an interdiction served upon the nations about; the other for its furthest extent and spreading, so as the one did shut the door, the other did no less wonderfully set it open.

Sec. 7. Though such extraordinary signs were then undeniable, both for confirming and spreading of the gospel; yet is it manifest, that the greatest mean for making this effectual, and building of the Christian church, wherein her blessed head choosed to have his appearance most remarkable and convincing in those times, was by the *effusion of the Holy Ghost*, and concurrence thereof with his word on the hearts of men; a truth I must say, should be in another manner thought of, if we knew the weight, and import of this, that so great an attestation to the gospel, and the certainty of it, as nothing can be greater, is by those assurances to be known, and no less demonstrable, than we can be sure of the form and being of Christianity. Though I have elsewhere touched this subject, I must here add some things further, to clear that peculiar respect this hath, in a greater manifestation thereof, to the times of the New Testament, beyond any former ages of the church, as that greatest gift expressly promised and reserved to the same, and how sure and visible it hath been in the event; when we may see, that, until then, the work of the Spirit was more known, as a private seal on the hearts of the godly, than by any such public witness, as a confirmatory seal of the doctrine of the church, and commission of the publishers thereof before others: and until then, was that evidence and demonstration of the Spirit in no such manner known, with an enforcing conviction on the conscience of those, who were otherwise strangers to its work on their own souls, as hath been undeniable under the gospel; yea, that the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which there is no atonement, is only thus mentioned under the New Testament, and with respect to those times of so visible a manifestation thereof. 2. Until then was no such illumination of the Spirit let forth, for discerning of spiritual things, and opening up the mysteries of the gospel, for searching out the deep things of God; nor were those mysteries sealed up, in such a manner unveiled until the times of the gospel. 3. It was most clear with those remarkable sufferings of the Christian church, which so early then broke up, and for the

most of after-times continued till this day; how convincing the sending down of the comforter was, to bear out the credit, of his people, and make good their encouragement under those greatest trials; and that thus those living springs of the comforts of the Holy Ghost, did in those times no less remarkably break up; yea, in some suitable measure, to the drying up, of those lower consolations, which were formerly let forth, when the promises lay more in externals. 4. If we own this visible creation to be the immediate work of God, above the possibility of second causes; it is then sure, the Spirit of the Lord moving thereon, for its first bringing forth, is not more demonstrable, than that effectual operation and moving of the same Spirit with the doctrine of Christ, for a bringing forth of the Christian world, which is no less wonderful and stupendous in its frame than the other; and the concurrence of instruments in that time, as to what they were in themselves, so unsuitable for such an end, as all may see, it was the same word that said in the beginning, *Let there be a heaven, and an earth*, which then with no less evidence said, let there be a new Christian world, and flourishing churches brought forth out of the most rude, dark and savage parts of the earth. 5. It is now under the New Testament, that the Spirit given by our blessed Redeemer, to supply his room with his church here until he come again, is eminently set forth *in sealing us to the day of redemption*, Eph. i. 13. and imparting the first-fruits, and earnest even here, of that glorious inheritance above; yea, in a more discernible acting and writing forth in a practical history, those truths of the breathings, movings, teachings, quickenings, and comfortings of the Holy Ghost, as the real work and transcript of the Spirit on the hearts of the saints, causing them to know the kingdom of God within. 6. It is now also that the spirituality of religion, and necessity thereof in the worshipping of God, is in a further measure opened up and made known, which in former times, whilst the gospel was exhibit under shadows, was then more in the letter, in external ordinances and duties, than in the spirit and inward

conformity thereto, which is so sweet and easy a way the Lord hath put his people upon to serve him. I shall but add this one thing more, how, under the times of the gospel, that marvellous in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost is more eminently known to the church, not by some transient motions of light and love, but that familiar abode and residence insured thus by an irrevocable donation to the Christian church, John xiv. 16. *For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, and abide for ever.*

Seet. 8. It was then with the first dawning of the gospel, and in-gathering of the nations to the church, that so conspicuous an attestation of that truth did immediately follow thereon, John xii. 32. that in *Christ's being lifted up from the earth, he should draw all men after him*; when a standard was thus lift up to the dark and Pagan world, not to invite them only, but by an invisible efficacious power to determine their consent and in-coming unto him. This was indeed a most strange astonishing prophecy, and now is one of the greatest seals, that ever was appended to the Christian faith; than which nothing could be more clear in the event, that he who hath spoken, hath also done this, and is no illusion or imposture. 1. That no such change was ever known upon the world, until that blessed time came of the Redeemer's being lift up on the cross, *and then did he rent the heavens and come down, to cause the mountains flow down at his presence.* 2. That this power, which thus drew the world after it, *did not strive or cry, nor was its voice heard in the street*; yet such a voice as enforced the uttermost parts of the earth to subject thereto, with the greatest desire and consent. 3. That the *needle's pointing to the pole*, which is certainly one of the greatest mysteries of nature, can be no more sure, than that such, who were as incapable to move or stir as the cold *iran*, did then by a touch of this *hyper-magnetic* power, natively move toward Jesus Christ; yea, whom having not seen to love, by such a pull at their heart, as could not fail to bring the grip therewith. 4. That no rank nor state of men from the greatest monarchs to the meanest, no different size of man's

life, from infancy unto old age, hath been since Jesus Christ was lifted upon the cross, on whom this blessed drawing power hath not been conspicuously verified. 5. How innumerable are they, who are thus drawn, and made to move against their native bias, so as, with their deliberate choice, to quit their right eye and hand for the truth, to let the world see (and oft hath this sight been its amazement) how a touch of this power at the heart is such, as in one moment can prevail more, than all the enticements of the earth can withstand. 6. How oft this power hath been most discernible, when least of ordinary means was for such an end, whilst no teacher, but the inward teaching of the spirit, though by the word, yea, on such, where the greatest disadvantage, both from education and their natural disposition, might be evident; what rude, savage, insensible and stupid persons, imbittered in their enmity to the gospel, hath our blessed Redeemer thus drawn in to himself by one touch of his hand at their heart.

Seet. 9. It was the immediate appearance of God's judgment, which no distance of time can darken, in that desolating stroke on the *Jewish* nation and *Jerusalem*, within a few years after the suffering of Christ, by the *Romans* under *Titus Vespasian*; a stroke, both in the manner and continuance, such as no instance present or past could ever be found to resemble; and, when seriously considered, one of the greatest appearances of God against a people hath been, since man was formed in the earth, where these concurring circumstances, for giving light thereto, call for our serious observing; 1. That in so short a time after the death of our blessed Lord, not above forty years, this should take place, and that blood fall on them in that very generation, with their hands as it were hot and reeking in the same, which they had wished on them and their children. 2. By the *Romans*, whose interest, in their opposition to Christ, they pretended most to own. 3. By such an instrument also, as *Titus Vespasian*, of so singularly sweet a natural disposition, so mild and compassionate, as he was called *Deliciae humani generis*; yea one, 'who to the sur-

theft sought a preventing of their ruin, that all might see it was the finger of God. 4. Their being visibly enforced to be executioners of their own judgment, so as the adversaries without did not so effectually concur to accomplish this, as they did amongst themselves, to shew its being something fatal beyond all possibility to save. 5. That the time thereof should be at the passover, not only thus for a greater ruin, by the in-gathering of such multitudes from the whole land into the city; but also by this remarkable circumstance, to point, as with the finger, at the cause of so stupendous a judgment, and thus tryst at the very time of the sufferings of the Lord there. 6. That no repentance or serious enquiry after the true cause, did follow, but more desperate induration, a being broken without contrition or humbling. 7. That strange contrariety and malice then, and to this day, against the Christians, more than any other party, yea, than against the *Romans*, who had been the instruments of their ruin, even whilst they knew the Christian church sought no other decisive judge than those sacred records of the Old Testament betwixt them. 8. A stroke, not on the nation, their families, and persons only, but on the temple, to the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, and that *Levitical* service they so much trusted in, with such a concurrence of providences therein, as might thus shew the institution of that service was then ceased. It is observable, that after the coming of Christ, and that one blessed sacrifice in his death was offered up, that the custom of sacrificing, not only amongst the *Jews*, but what had been this way amongst the Heathen also, did then cease every where through the world. 9. So convincing was a divine hand in this stroke, as *Titus*, though a Heathen, could answer his friends in their desire to have him crowned, that he was not the author of that work, but had only given his hands to serve the judgment of God herein, as even by Heathen writers is witnessed; and those known medals, which have to following ages been still reserved, hath that impress thereon; of *Vespasian*, and a woman sitting sorrowful under a *Palm-tree*, with these words, *JUDAEA CAPTA*.

S. C. 10. We may see also their scattering so far extended through the world, that there might be as conspicuous a monument of judgment set up, and made discernible to all, as the furthest extent of Christianity. It is indeed strange, men do not more seriously turn aside to consider those two great sights now under the gospel; the one of the scattered *Jesus*, so amazing a beacon set up for all ages to look on; the other of the *Romish* church, so as to enquire what these mean, whilst both give such clear light to the truth, and accomplishment of the word, as may silence the greatest *Atheist*.

SECT. 10. It was with those first times of the gospel, that the fall and ceasing of the whole heathenish oracles was so remarkable and confirming a seal thereto, as all times might see, before what power it was they fell, and could no longer stand these concurring circumstances being clear, 1. That for so many ages the devil thus had a throne and subjection from the world, and was one of the greatest engines he ever followed, for keeping it in awe by such a counterfeit, set up against the living oracles of God, in his word. 2. That this time and season of their fall, and being struck dumb for ever, was so evident, whilst the devil was put to the hottest war, for keeping up his interest, and so close a siege laid on his kingdom by the gospel; so as, on the furthest contest and strugglings he could then make, his sceptre was wrested out of his hand, and broken in the open field. 3. We see this marvellous event most clearly answer to what was foretold in the Scripture thereof, and as that which should follow on the promised time of the gospel, Zech. xiii. 2. John xii. 31. 4. It is known in what a strange amaze this put the world then, and into perplexed enquiries, what it could mean, that their gods, whom for many ages the nations adored, and sought to in all doubtful cases, should thus at once be struck dumb; about which *Lucan* heavily complains, and *Juvinal Satyr*. 3. that the gods, by whom the *Empire* stood, had thus abandoned their temples and sacrifice, and left them alone. *Strabo* confesseth the priests of *Delphos* were brought to beggary by it, yea, *Platarch* hath a book expressly thereupon, *De*

continentia Oraculorum, and could no further reach it, but that it seemed they were mortal, and that presaging virtue the earth had, where the seat of those oracles was, had been spent and exhausted:

SECT. 11. It may be convincing also, that testimony which the devil was then enforced to give, and confess by what power those oracles were restrained; as that known answer to *Augustus' Legate* about his Successor, cited by *Swidas* out of *Æmilius Portus*, and other most ancient writers; *Me puer Hebraeus jubet hoc discedere templo. Rex divum & stygium, rursus remeare sub oreum. Tutacitus quare hoc nostra altaria linque.* Likewise that which *Justin Martyr*, who wrote in the second century, cites of the oracle of *Apollo*, in these words; *Soli Chaldaei sapiunt & Hebraea virum gens, qui puro haud gentum, venerantur pectore munem.* *Just. Mart. P. 116.* I confess those with many passages of the *Sybillas*, I sometimes judged to be no other, than the *piae fraudes* of some Christians; which I know is the judgment of many; but, on more serious enquiry, I cannot see how these possibly can be cast or rejected, where such clear and pungent evidences are of their truth, as, 1. That such a force put upon the devil to confess the truth of Christianity, is that which hath clearest Scripture light and precedent for the same, *Acts xvi. 17. & xix. 15. 2.* As it is sure, the devils believe and tremble, and that there is no possibility for Atheism, or questioning the truth of the Scripture by those reprobate spirits, there seems no cause for any to hesitate at such an enforcement as this, from the Lord to confess the same, as a witness of his sovereignty over them. 3. It is clear also, that, upon this account, the *Roman senate* was then forced to forbid the reading of the *Sybillas* as well as of the Scripture, by public edict, lest thus any should be staggered about the Pagan religion; as most ancient records of those times witness, and is particularly cited by *Just. Mart. Apol. 2. page 82.* and *Hottinger* holds forth *Hist. lib. 1. p. 55.* 4. There is no possible eviting that citation of the oracle at *cume, virg. eclog. 6.* which so evidently points at the incarnation of Christ and being born of a

virgin, and was so near the time of that *Asinus Pollio*, to whom in flattery he applieth this. 5. Though these are not to be owned as any seal or confirmation to the Christian faith, but to leave the heathens thus more inexcusable, whose religion was to worship the devil; yet may it be clear, what horrid impiety this should have been for any Christians to obtrude such a falsehood on the world, if the truth thereof had not been evident; yea, how is it possible for this to pass without some public contradiction thereto by the heathen adversaries, and such knowing critics among them, as *Lucian*, *Porphyry*, *Celsus*, and *Libanius* the *sophist* were in these times?

Sect. 12. It was remarkable then, whilst Satan is beat off his throne, by this fall of the oracles, what strugglings he still hath to counteract the gospel, by some lying wonders, in opposition to those extraordinary signs, which were then given to confirm the truth; as in *Simon Magus*, whose dreadful close our church-writers hold forth; but most remarkably, in setting up that notable magician *Apollonius Thianæus*, one beyond most that ever the world knew of that kind, yea, such as *Hierocles* brings in, to compete with those miracles of the gospel; but how quickly, as in a moment, did that hellish vapour, exhaled out of the bottomless pit to trouble the air, in a little vanish and disappear?

Sect. 13. It was remarkable, what breathing for a time the Christian church with its first up-breaking got, during the reign of *Tiberius Caligula*, and *Claudius*; which, though short, yet was until that blessed seed of Christianity in a great measure was sown amongst the nations by the preached gospel, and had begun to take root, ere that dreadful impetuous storm of persecution, which came after, brake up. *Tiberius*, being certified by *Pilate* out of *Palestine*, concerning the affairs of *Christ*, proposed to the senate his being reckoned among the gods; which they opposing, he threatened that it should be dangerous for any to accuse a Christian, as *Tertul.* relates, *Apol.* cap. 5. 21. *Euseb.* lib. 2. cap. 2. also *Gildas* in his epistles; upon which it was judged, after the killing of *Stephen*, that persecution so quickly ceased, through fear of

Tiberius. Thus the Lord in his blessed way, disposing, that the seed of the gospel should get a sowing time, and come to some solid growth, before any sharp and great storm, and the truth be received before the trial came; yea, that Christ himself in the power of his word came first, to insure the heart, before his cross, and a time of persecution.

Sect. 14. We see the first entry of the church's sufferings from the Gentiles by *Nero*, than whom none more visibly could be ever known transformed into the image of the devil; yea, such a monster, as at last the *Roman* senate declared him to be *hostis patriæ, & hostis humani generis*; that thus it might be in the blessed disposal of the Lord discernible to all, 1. By what spirit such an instrument was acted forth to exercise those cruelties then among the Christians, as human nature though corrupt, yet could not but stand at. 2. What a more excellent spirit, and invincible power was in those to support and overcome such a fury. 3. That then the great standard of Satan's kingdom was thus remarkably set up, and brought to the fields against the kingdom of Christ, by such a spirit of persecution: and then did open war begin against the gospel by the world; which though not always in like manner, or by the same weapons, hath these 1500 years past successively continued. What this fore persecution by *Nero* was, church-histories give but little light thereto; but I shall offer another Martyrology for this, which none will judge to be given as an intended witness to the Christian truth, out of *Cornel. Tacit.* whose words are these, ' *Nero* having set Rome on fire, to extinguish the rumour thereof, did falsely accuse and punish with exquisite torments those whom the people then called Christians, first they were apprehended, who confessed themselves to be Christians, then an huge multitude were convicted for setting the city on fire; (but as he saith) For that hatred all men had against them, scorn also were added to their sufferings; some were covered with beast's skins to be torn by dogs, some were crucified, and some burnt, and when the day failed, they were burnt to give light by night, whilst *Nero* made his garden fit for that

‘spectacle, so as pity was by others taken, seeing they suffered not for any common good, but to satisfy his cruelty.’ Thus *Tacitus*, lib. 15. cap. 44. which *Juvenal* also holds forth.

Seet. 15. It may be truly said, and on clearest grounds demonstrable, that the Lord’s way with the Gentile church in the first in-bringing thereof, and for two ages after, was a continued miracle; when these are considered and brought near our thoughts, 1. How it is so obvious, that that very time, in the two first centuries of the church’s hottest persecution, was that time, wherein the Christian church so remarkably spread in the world; yea, her begun declining did no less observably contemporate with that sunshine, which followed of outward peace and prosperity, after Constantine’s time; a truth so known and undeniable, that it yet should be to us as it were a present object of sense this day. 2. That marvellous resolution and joy, which then attended Christians in their extremest sufferings, as they could not smother or conceal the truth thereof, to the astonishment of the world, when nothing could be a greater contradiction to sense and reason. Here was that pretended apathy of the ancient Stoicks, which they owned in their doctrine, but not example, in another manner to be understood; not that they wanted sense and feeling of their pain and sufferings, but these were made sweet and easy, by a more sensible overpowering taste and sealing of the comforts of the Holy Ghost; 3. How here was a bearing up with more than human strength, against a cruelty so visibly inhuman and savage. 4. As ’tis clear from the primitive histories of the church then, what amazement and conviction was thus enforced on the conscience of the adversaries, as it put them to enquire into the causes of their sufferings: As *Tertullian* shews thus, *Quisque enim tantam tolerantiam spectans, ut a iquo scrupulo percussus inquirere accenditur, quid sit in causa, & ubi cognoverit veritatem; ipse statim sequitur.* *Tertul. Apol.* cap. 50. viz. ‘That whilst on-lookers saw such resolution in the sufferings of the saints, were put to search what might be the cause;

‘and when once they knew the truth did themselves also fall
 ‘in love therewith, to follow it.’ And further thus, *Quis enim
 non in contemplatione ejus concutitur ad requirendum quid intus
 in re sit; quis non ubi requi fuit, accedit, ubi accessit, pati non ex-
 optat?* that is, ‘Who then in beholding this, was not shaken
 ‘in that manner, as to a serious enquiry what might be in
 ‘the matter? And who thus did once search after the truth,
 ‘did not also engage therewith? yea, who embraced it,
 ‘whose choice and desire was not also to suffer for the same?’

5. The greatest of Atheists must see, that those did not thus
 suffer, to propagate a known delusion, and that such joy and
 exultation of spirit, amidst those torments is not conceivable
 without a divine immediate assistance; as the same Tertullian,
 who lived in the second century, thus attests the Heathens
 herein ‘Cum omni sevitia vestra concertamus, etiam ultro
 ‘erumpentes, magisque damnati, quam absoluti gaudemus.’
That is, ‘We conflict, and are helped to overcome your
 ‘greatest cruelty, yea, cheerfully to go through all, rejoicing
 ‘more in being sentenced and condemned, than in absolution.’

6. How mean and feeble persons, as many of those were,
 (when considered what they were in themselves) should thus
 endure that, which would have fainted, and been a terror to
 the greatest natural courage.

Sect. 16. It was in those times that this might be clearly
 seen, how such strange and amazing effects of the gospel
 upon Christians was not more obvious, than such judicial ef-
 fects of rejecting the same was upon others: with that rage
 and malice against the truth, which did in such a manner
 then burst forth, as the world had not known before: yea,
 no interest can be instanced from any record of former times,
 had such a strange opposition and contrariety thereto, as the
 truth of the gospel; a mystery, which in ages before not
 known by such appearances until then, what that enmity be-
 tween the seed of the woman, and that of the serpent was,
 as may be evident, 1. That insatiable thirst after Christian
 blood, as Sulpitius tells, ‘The world was no less exhausted
 ‘then by one persecution, than by the most bloody wars.’

2. How this strange violence and rage against the truth of the gospel could be owned upon no interest or private quarrel, but against such as shewed greatest kindness to their persecutors and greatest freedom from revenge; such, whom Justin Martyr, and Eusebius also in his ecclesiastic history, lib. 8. cap. 8. sheweth, that the adversaries could not deny such tenderness of Christians towards them, as they prayed for their persecuting emperors, for all the people that looked on, for the judge that condemned them, yea, for the executioner; to shew the world how far the spirit of Christians arises above the world, and what a spirit that must be, that did oppose and persecute these. 3. Such cruelty to be thus exercised on all conditions of women and children, which almost from savages would have pleaded compassion and tenderness, as 'Lactantius shews, *Ecce sexus infirmus, & fragilis ætas dilacerare se toto corpore, urique perpetitur, non necessitate, quia licet vitare si vellent, sed voluntate, quæ confident in Deo.* Lact. lib. 5. cap. 1. *which was,* That such 'then of that tender sex of women, and those so young years, 'did endure to have their bodies rent, yea, the flames of the 'fire, and this upon choice, and no enforcement of necessity, 'since they could have escaped, but because they adventured 'on God himself.' 4. This might be notour from the manner of such persecutions, as *Justin Martyr* shews how usual then it was to expose them to wild beasts, and invent torments for putting Christians to death; but withal, adds this, the more these were tried, The further increase had the church; To witness that dreadful and black day the light of the gospel puts on such as reject it, and bring forth what is latent in nature, that they could not have believed themselves; yea, that something further than men's natural enmity is here, to draw forth this to such an astonishing and height of fury and violence, and the very immediate power and incitement of the devil.

See 17. Whilst Satan thus essayed, but in vain, by such as *Nero* and *Domitian*, to withstand the gospel, and such first buddings thereof, we see a little after, how he tries the same.

weapon with more subtilty, in putting on such as *Trajan*, *Adrian*, and *Antonius Pius*, to follow the same work of persecuting the church, thus to cause in the world a greater abhorring against the truth, in its being assaulted by such emperors, that, for their justice and moderation in regard of the laws, were so endeared to the empire. But, as no weapon formed against the truth can prosper, this did not lett that marvellous spreading of the gospel then; But a clear commentary was thus given upon that Scripture-truth, *That the wisdom of the world is enmity with God*, and none stated more remarkably at a disadvantage with the gospel, than such; yea, what a change that inbred contrariety in men against the truth, will cause on the greatest moralists, those of most calm and peaceable dispositions, to a breaking forth in rage, when once they begin to be scorched with the heat and power thereof.

Seet. 18. It was then, this immediate appearance of the Lord, to give some breathing and lucid interval to the church, amidst such lasting storms, might be evident, 1. In enforcing some of the adversaries themselves, such as *Plinius Junior*, who was in greatest repute in those times, to acquit the Christians of that they were charged with; as by his letter to *Trajan*, which gave some stop to the present persecution then, is clear: For he shews *How far that infection* (as he calleth it there) *had crept into cities, towns and villages: and that, except in the matter of their religion, they were known to abstain from all gross crimes, to keep their faith, and defraud no man:* Yea, which is more observable, in the close of his letter, doth propose to the emperor a more favourable dealing towards the Christian church, as the probable mean to prevent their further increase; which did the more advance, the more violence had been used against them. This letter, with *Trajan's* answer, by *Tertul. Apol. & Eus. Eccl. Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 33.* are there set down at large. 2. By that extraordinary appearance of the Lord in answering the Christian legion under *Auerilus Antonius*, when the *Roman* army was at a remarkable exigence in war with the *Vandals* and *Sar-*

mates, which was so convincing, both to the emperor, and his whole army, as enforced this account by his letter to the senate and people of *Rome* thereof; "That being with his army ready to perish for want of water; and environed by the enemy, having sought of their country gods, but in vain, for help; that Christian legion, which then was amongst them, fell prostrate on the ground, and by prayer obtained such an answer, as there fell amongst us (saith the emperor) a most pleasant cooling shower from heaven, but against the enemy a storm of hail mingled with lightning, so as presently we found the invincible hand of the most mighty God. Upon which he orders all persecutions throughout the empire to sist against the Christians. This in the same Age doth *Justin Martyr* set down in his Apology to the *Roman* senate, and is at length also cited by *Tertullian* and *Arosius* who herein appeal the adversary to the emperor's letters in their own standing records."

3. Which is most remarkable, that, even under the reign of *Commodus* the emperor, such a bloody monster and scourge to the *Roman* senate and empire, the church of Christ then got a sweet and favourable calm, with some rest for a season, yea more than under the reign of some, who were more favourable in their natural disposition, to shew that dominion which the glorious God doth exercise, not only over the greatest, but the worst of men, and how the most notable mercies and advantages of the church are most usually brought forth, against all visible appearances.

See. 19. This also, for the church's support and strengthening in those times, should not want a grave remark in the Lord's calling forth some, with singular advantage of gifts and human learning, to oppose against the subtle cavils and reproach of the adversary, for clearing of the truth; so as we may see, when such as *Porphyry*, *Lucius Celsus*, &c. were at work to discredit the Christians by their writings, such excellent men were no less discernibly brought forth for this present service of the church, as *Quadratus Arisides*, whose notable *Apologies* for the truth of Christ, the one to *Trajan*, the

other to *Adrian*, with some conviction, that this was enforced upon them, are cited by *Euseb. Hist. Lib. 4.* and *Jerome* in his *Catalogue*, and *Iustin Martyr*, who wrote a twofold *Apology*, the one to the senate, and the other to *Antonius*, the emperor, and a little thereafter, *Tertullian* and *Melito of Sardis*, whose weighty arguments are set down by most of ancient church histories; that it thus may be seen, no time since that marvellous erection of the Christian church, hath wanted some discernible out-lettings of the Spirit for its present exigences; yea, that such is the truth of the gospel, that it comes with the furthest and clearest advantage, to convince the judgment, as well as to engage the affections, and to offer itself to trial to all, anent its truth, by undeniable reason, as well as experience. Thus did they appeal their adversaries anent the truth, with such advantage, to enforce a conviction upon them, if these things could possibly be denied, 1. That their gods were forced to confess themselves to be devils, as *Tertullian* shews *Apol. cap. 23.* ‘And why do you not herein (*saieth he*) believe when they speak truth, who yet believe them when they speak lies; whilst you see this could not be their own choice, whilst they witness against themselves, if they were not enforced?’ 2. That, wherever the name of Christ was called upon, those spirits whom they worshipped, were under a visible restraint as to their power; yea, the presence of a Christian, when the Heathens were about their divination, and by their priests seeking answer from the Devil, did so visibly frustrate those essays, as made them cry out, *They were hindered by some of the company.* See *Lactantius lib. 4. cap. 27.* 3. That they could not but see, in delivering the doctrine of the gospel and profession thereof, there was no tentation, nor any possible advantage to be looked for from the world, but did visibly counteract any such end, as repute and credit in the earth, outward riches, or delights of the flesh; their whole life a continued course of suffering and trouble, no visible grounds of hope; ‘but were of all men most miserable, if in this life they had owned their hope,’ and had no other assurances, than what is

here. 4. If that doctrine they professed, and bare witness to, of the gospel, did not bring with it the greatest enforcements of sincerity, truth in the heart and inward parts, and speaking of the truth in every thing, whatever hazard should follow. 5. If such was not the doctrine of Christianity, as all might see, so far above the reach of human wisdom, the furthest learning of the *Greeks*, as was wholly impossible that such persons as the apostles were, could ever have had, or known this of themselves. 6. That the Christian doctrine, and that only, could settle the soul on a sure foundation, whilst the knowing amongst the Heathens were in such continual fluctuating and uncertainty about any truth of religion, or an after-state; and most of their gods as *Jupiter*, *Saturn*, &c. by that very account themselves give, were some of the vilest of men, and had been in the former ages notable for oppression and villanies. 7. That the very mysteries of the Heathen religion were horrid and impure, so as they durst not let them be common and known. But O that infinite purity of Scripture, *Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth!* John xvii. 8. This also the Heathens could not know how to deny, that Christianity brought with it such a public blessing to mankind, did so undeniably tend to a perfecting of human nature, and engaging to those duties of mutual profit and subserviency amongst men towards one another, such as love, tenderness, sympathy with the afflicted, which by their own greatest writers was accounted pusillanimity, and as a vice rather than a virtue, as *Laertius in vita Zenonis* expressly shews, page 512. and of what singular use to present those embittering torments, disorders and perturbations, that as natively follow a proud and vindictive spirit, as the shadow on the body, by its blessed tendency to move the soul, yea transform it into humility and meekness; and what a lustre it puts, not on men only, but on those very parts of the earth, where Christianity doth in its vigour shine forth.

SECT. 20. It is remarkable, how in the very close of the church's sufferings from the Heathen adversary, that last assault under *Dioclesian* was of all most grievous and searching,

whose exprefs edicts were then given forth, not againſt Chriſtians only as to perſonal perfecution; but againſt Chriſtianity; and who laid forth himſelf more than any before, to have ſtruck, if poſſible, at the whole root; by ſubtilty as well as violence, ſo as this greateſt darkneſs, did go but a very little before the dawning of an univerſal peace; but with theſe convincing advantages to the truth, 1. In the bringing forth thus a moſt remarkable witneſs thereto; that when he purſued ſo much the delivering up of their Bibles, which he moſt vigorously then eſſayed, and when it was ineffectual, fought but a leaf of clean paper, as a teſt of their yielding; the Chriſtians then chooſed the furtheſt of ſufferings, rather than to come this length: upon which that name was given to any, who thus yielded; of being *traditors*. 2. It was no leſs clear, that whiſt this emperor, in his boaiſting confidence had cauſed erect a pillar, with that inſcription on it. *DIO-CLES CAES. AUGUST SUPERSTITIONE CHRISTI UBIQUE DELETA: CULTU DEORUM PROPAGATO*; as *Baronius* at length ſhews, *Vide Hotting.* part 1. cap. 4. page 182. and thus ſung the triumph before the victory; he was broken in all his attempts, and ſo caſt down with the church's further riſe and growth, as at laſt he reſigned the empire. 3. Then alſo was this marvellous appearance of the Lord when the church ſeemed to be at the very loweſt, that ſo very ſhort a time ſhould interveen betwixt a *Diocleſian* and a *Conſtantine*.

ſect. 21. We ſee in thoſe times when the church's wreſtlings and perfecutions were ſo remarkable, ſuch great examples of judgment alſo ſet up, and made obvious for the world's obſerving as might infer ſome conviction therewith, that aſſuredly they were no ordinary or caſual occurrences, or ſuch as have had uſual precedents in the change of human affairs; but the very immediate appearances of God made diſcernible therein, to whom the blood of ſaints is precious. 1. It is known, that *Pilate* was ſo continually vexed by *Caius* the emperor: even he who had, over the wreſtlings of a natural conſcience, given forth that ſentence againſt our bleſſed Lord, as he was enforced to kill himſelf, and be his own ex-

ecutioner; as *Hierom* in his *Chronicle* out of the *Roman* history, *Eusebius* in his *Ecclesiastical History*, out of the *Greek* writers of the *Olympiads*, lib. 2. cap. 7. also *Cassiodorus* in his *Chronicle*, do with one consent witness, as *Usher* in his *Annals* hath set down; and certainly was then such a passage, considering the party to whom it relates, as would be gravely noticed, and with the exactest enquiry by Christians of that time; yea, this must have been so public, as all may judge the convey and transmitting thereof could not easily have come under mistake, to those times wherein *Eusebius* and *Hierom* wrote. 2. We may see in that instance of *Herod Agrippa*, the very first of the kings of the earth that stretched forth his hand against the Christian church, a public beacon of divine judgment, thus set up for the great men and monarchs of after ages to take warning by; who, after he had killed *James* the brother of *John* by the sword, in a public appearance after the blasphemous shoutings of the people, was smitten by the angel of God, Acts xii. 17. which (the very same in substance) is related by *Josephus* Antiq. lib. 19. cap. ult. "That when he had finished the third year of his reign, and at *Cesarea* solemnized some plays for *Caesar's* health, to which a great number of noblemen and young persons came, on the second day thereof he goes in his princely robes, rich and curiously wrought with silver, which by the sun's reflection made an extraordinary lustre; and whilst upon some flatterers saluting him as God, he did not refuse nor reject such impious adulation, did a little after see an owl sitting over his head, a prognostic of his ruin; was struck to the heart with most grievous torments in his belly, so, as he was forced to turn to his friends, and say behold I, who by you was called a god, am commanded out of this life, and my present fate gives the lie to your flatteries, being forced to death whom you saluted as immortal; after which his pains increasing, in great extremity he died." Which passage, besides Scripture-authority, may be convincing to the greatest Atheists, to see, whilst it is one in substance therewith, is in so different

a manner, and with other circumstances by *Josephus* set down; and how far this was from any intended concurrence with the evangelist *Luke* therein, but as a part of the history of those times, yea was by him written in the very same age when it fell out, an occurrence of that nature, as concerned all *Judea* to know, and could not from any private information be obvious to mistake, which was then so public and famous in the view of the world. 3. We may then also see that famous apostate *Lucian*, who lived near the first century, once a profest minister of the gospel at *Antioch*, but after an avowed Atheist, and, in hatred of the Christian faith, a promoter of *Paganism*, as those horrid *Dialogues*, by him set forth, shew, was at last torn in pieces by dogs, as *Swidas*, with other writers of the church history then shew. 4. It may be an astonishing remark to all following ages, that for the first 200 years after Christ, wherein were near thirty-two emperors, not three of them was without either a violent death, or something singularly tragic in their close; as may be clear from the whole consent of the records of that time. 5. It is most evident also, under those sore and continued persecutions of the Christian church, what remarkable judgments were then inflicted on the Roman empire, and how heavy and sad the hand of men, and their yoke was upon them by those bloody and cruel tyrants, who for most of those times were set over them, who would not come under the sweet and desirable yoke of Jesus Christ in his offer of the gospel; there being no histories can shew such a series of visible monsters as most of those were, excepting *Trajan* and few else, who then successively were advanced to rule; so as in those two ages, when the church history might be read in characters of blood, and such continued sufferings of the saints, the tragedies of the Roman empire might be as obvious; and have as large a room in the records of that time.

Sect. 22. It was in those trying times, we may see a singular providence of the Lord, to secure that blest invaluable record of the Scriptures, and particularly that of the New Testament in all the parts thereof, after its delivery to the

church, beyond the possibility of hazard, or access for obtruding any false transcript; so as then, and in all after-times, the churches of Christ might even with the greatest advantage of reason and moral inducements be assured anent the canon, and what is truly cononical, and what not; 1. By the swift and astonishing conquest the gospel then had in so short a time, through most of the known world; so as in the age of the apostles, not only in Asia, but places most remote, where famous churches were planted, there was necessarily enforced a diffusing of innumerable copies of the original, the Greek then being so universally known, even whilst the autographs of the evangelists and apostles were still extant in the church; as Tertullian shews they were in his time, who lived in the second century: and it is sure, no other way could they make use of, for delivering of the doctrine of Christianity, or instructing the people thereanent, but those pure fountains themselves, which they had to shew as their authority and warrant; for the doctrine of implicate faith was not then known, but all expressly called to search the Scriptures. 2. By those sharp and extreme persecutions the church then was under; when to profess the Christian faith, and suffer for the same, was every where so inseparably linked, as could not but enforce each Christian to a near and personal converse with that inestimably divine record, for having some copy under their reach, to know the solidity of that doctrine which they were to seal with their blood, and adventure on into eternity. 3. by those various controversies and out-breakings of error then in the church, with such heat and animosity as followed thereon; which necessarily enforced all who loved the truth, to be sure and confirmed from the text and letter itself. 4. By that necessity the church was then put to, on the furthest enquiry, and certainty of what was truly canonical from the up-breaking of some counterfeit books, as a special engine of the devil to darken the truth, such as the *acts of Paul*, the *epistle of Barnabas*, and *revelation of Peter*; But this tended in the blest providence of the Lord to its further clearing; being thus after an exactest

trial exauctorated by consent of all the churches of Christ, and what was truly canonic, more known. 5. By that remarkable providence, for the church's confirming, of the continuance so long of *John* the evangelist after the rest of the apostles, to some more than an 100 years, after the birth of Christ, as *Irenaeus* shews *lib. 2. page 192.* with other ancient writers, whose work was peculiarly given him of the Lord, to shut up and seal the canon of the whole Scripture; and then lived, when he could peruse and attest the whole books of the New Testament, and difference them from any counterfeit writings, that thus the canon of the New Testament might be unanswerably cleared by apostolic authority; which *Eusebius* expressly shews also from the testimony of the most famous writers of those times, how, on the earnest desire of the Asiatic churches, the whole of the New Testament was confirmed by the attestation of *John* thereto. 6. By that singular advantage, in the counsel of the Lord, for preserving his truth, that the doctrine of the gospel by the apostles and evangelists, was delivered over, not only in writ, but in such a form of sound words for the church to keep close by, as left no liberty for after-times in the least to alter the same. 7. From the Christian church being so absolutely founded in the whole, both of faith and practice on the New Testament, as well as the Old; so as, with the first spreading of the churches of Christ among the Gentiles, it may be seen, the same use, and continued improvement of those records, was as necessarily required to know the certainty thereof, as Britain or any other kingdom can have of those fundamental statutes, and laws, on which the very standing and safety of the nation most leans: for tho' the validity, or sure convey of some private record might possibly come under debate, where there is not evidence enough to demonstrate the contrary; could any judge, or have the least hesitation thereanent, that the isle of Britain, or the German empire, were not to the furthest secure anent the certainty of those statutes and securities, with which their greatest interest and property is in a manner incorporate, and indissolubly conjoined,

so as not to know from one age to another the undoubted truth and authority thereof, when such constant and continued use in application of those in the whole concerns of the nation, is so undeniable? 8. By that providence, in directing those divine records, and delivering them over to the church, not as a public monument to be kept only, but for each private Christian's use and comfort, whereon they must live and feed in their journey through time; so as it may be truly said, not particular churches alone, but that innumerable company of Christians dispersed through the world in those first times, were the common library of those blessed records; though with the first planting of some of the churches, some part thereof could not be so soon spread amongst them as the rest, being the last of canonic Scripture written; which occasioned some questioning at first by a few, until its authority was more fully known and received. 9. By those many commentaries and other works on the Scripture, so near to the first times of the gospel, which were then publicly spread, and frequent citations of most of the New Testament, as it may be clear they had the very same Scripture, and knew no other than we have now. 10. By those various translations also in diverse languages, which were so early spread, as the Syriack not without ground judged to be in the very first century; the ancient Latin, which was long before Hierom's translation, yea, near also with the first age, as may be evident from our church-histories, with other translations, such as the Arabic, that though with some small differences, yet in substance retains the whole of the Christian doctrine.

Sect. 23. What hath in after-ages seemed to be the greatest loss to the church, and much regreted by many, that so great a want now is of some clear and particular account from the histories of that time, of the lives and actions of the apostles after their dispersing through the world, and of the planting of particular churches; should, if seriously considered, tend much more to our further confirming in the truth, where all may see so convincing a providence from the

LORD, to prevent after-times laying that weight on example or practice of the primitive saints, which alone must be on the Scripture itself, whereto (as it is too obvious) they have been so eagerly prone: The God of truth thus foreseeing, what need there was for the church in following ages to be kept off this rock of following the traditions of men, or leaning thereon, more than on those living oracles of sacred truth; that we might know no copy else to write after, no human authority to compete therewith, but this alone to be the rule and standard, by which the doctrine of the church is to be tried, and at whose bar and decision it must stand.

See. 24. Yet it is clear from the surest records of those times, with what lustre and advantage the Christian church and primitive Christians then did appear, who were a part of the first-fruits of the gospel amongst the Gentiles, and as the first copy taken off that divine original pattern, the Scripture itself; such as walked in singleness of heart, and in the joy and comfort of the Holy Ghost, whose first love is so particularly mentioned, Rev. ii. 3. and as *Aegesippus* cited by *Euseb.* lib. 3. cap. 29. shews, that unto those times, which was that of *Trajan's*, the church of Christ remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin: for such, as endeavoured to corrupt the perfect rule and sound preaching of the word, then hid themselves in some secret and obscure place. But though such particular account thereof be wanting, as hath been much wished for; yet it is sure, that those visible realities of the ancient holiness of that time, and what a rare sight then the Christian church was, of an excellent society, though in the world, yet living much above it, may to this day be on clearest grounds demonstrable. 1. In that primitive zeal and fervour that was for the spreading of the kingdom of Christ through the dark world, and at what a rate those, whom the Lord called forth on such service, did adventure in the most rude and savage parts, with no visible encouragement, no incitements, but the service of such a master, which they more valued than any trade the merchants of the earth have, for gold and silver; so as it is convincingly transmitted, what a

victory such then had over the flesh, with the world and sensual pleasures thereof; and how those, who got the first trial of the gospel, found it assuredly to be a matter of substance and truth, and no shadow; and put this seal thereto. 2. It is known what such then were, in a singular usefulness and largeness of heart, for the interest of others; so as even the corrupt world could not but see those were the common good and blessing of mankind, whom they did thus persecute; as both *Tertul. Apol.* page 83. and *Eusebius* out of *Dionysius*, lib. 7. cap. 17. do at large witness, “How convincingly the
 “primitive Christians did appear, not only in the exercises
 “of holiness and fervent worshipping God, but in those duties
 “of humanity and sympathy with others, yea, not amongst
 “themselves alone, but toward the Heathen also, in owning
 “the afflicted with their help, regarding the sick and distressed;
 “not fearing at those diseases which were most loathsome
 “and contagious, without respect to their own hazard there-
 “in, from the love of Christ.” 3. We may know from the whole consent of the histories of that time, what choice and excellent persons, many of the ancient Eremites were, who, under those bloody persecutions in the first and second centuries, when they thus were enforced to retire, did sequester themselves from the world, for the exercises of godliness, and searching out of the mysteries of the kingdom of God from the Scriptures; yea, how far they were from that way, or following such unwarranted acts of mortification and abstinence, as the legends of the Romish church did in after-times admire and cry up; and hath been an effectual engine of the Devil, to bring the truth of holiness, and what was unquestionably obvious thereanent, in the first times under discredit. It is true, they were not of one rank, as the most ecclesiastical writers shew, some keeping together more in societies who were indeed seminaries for the service of the church, amidst the sharp persecutions which then were; others have been more abstract and retired in their living alone; yet this account is most certainly transmitted, even of such, how laborious they were in their duty, not idle, or laying themselves

afide from being useful to others, even to the meanest, where they had access: Of the first sort, we find a long continuance in the church, as it evidently appears, with whom Epiphanius from his youth was brought up, and gives a most honourable account of them in his works; and *Ruffinus* lib. 2. cap. 8. shews his visiting of those in Egypt, and what excellent persons they were, even in that time. 4. We may see, with what lustre of the truth, of holiness and simplicity of the gospel, is the remembrance of those, who then were called *Culdees* in several places of *Scotland*; from their being such assiduous worshippers of God, to this very day transmitted by the most sure and ancient records we have of that time, who, as *Buchanan* shews in his *Chronicle*, came into the country in *Dioclesian's* time, being then enforced to flee to these north-places from the violence of that persecution, and, by a remarkable providence, thus determined for spreading of the gospel there, whose work was not only convincing in the secret exercises of holiness, but in public preaching did lay forth themselves, for bringing in the people, so savage and barbarous then, to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and for some ages after had a visible succession of others, who followed them in this blessed work, for whom those times had such veneration, as their cells were afterwards turned into churches and bear to this day their names, who then were among the first publishers of the gospel. 5. It is sure also, that such visible realities of the state of the churches of Christ then, transmitted even to this day, as all may see, what an innumerable company, in these times, loved not their life to the death, but choosed the greatest of torments for Jesus Christ and his truth, as the Martyrologies of the church do clearly witness; and thus, what fervency of love, subduedness to the flesh and the world, with the lively hope and assurance of that glory to come, did shine forth; the truth of which marvellous effects, must convincingly witness both the reality of the cause, and the excellency thereof.

CHAP. II.

Self. 1. THAT great event and revolution of providence, when the set time was come for giving rest to the churches, after such sore and continued sufferings, was such, as no serious observer, but even at this day, may see, as it were, in some manner present, the very immediate finger and appearance there of God. 1. In calling for one, from so remote a corner as Britain, where *Constantine* then was, to serve his counsel, in breaking that formidable power of the Heathen empire, when *Maxentius* the son of *Maximinianus Hercules*, a horrid flagitious person, and avowed adversary to the Christians, was by the Roman legions set up. 2. In that remarkable providence of *Maxentius's* being drawn forth without the gates of Rome with his forces; yea enforced, in his flying, to take that very same bridge for passing over the river, which of purpose was contrived to ensnare *Constantine* and his army, and so joined and linked together for that end, which then fell assunder, as soon as he and his army had taken the same, where himself, with the chief of his followers sunk down, and plunged like stones in the river; a verifying of truth which the Christian church then was made to observe, "That the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands;" yea, on such an account, to sing the song of *Moses* at the *Red-sea*, how the horse and his rider he had thrown in the sea, as *Euseb.* and *Socrates*, the first of whom lived in the present time, expressly witness, wherein they have the concurrence of all our church-histories. 3. Though it is on no miracles, or extraordinary providences, we lean, or must lay any stress, anent the truth of Christianity, who have the Scripture of God in the Old and New Testament to found on; yet since it is unquestionable duty to observe the great works of the Lord, and to make a diligent search therein; we must also consider that extraordinary and miraculous appearance to *Constantine* and his army, which they had a vision of in the heavens in the noon-day, before their engaging with

Maxentius, of a pillar of light, in some form of a cross, with these words most legible in Greek about the same, *ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ*, *Socrates*, lib. 1. cap. 1 *Euseb.* lib. 22. cap. 24. about which being much troubled to know the meaning of so stupendous a providence, he was that night by an audible voice in his sleep, shewed, that he should cause that figure, which was shewed to him and his army, to be put forth in his banner to the view of his enemies; a relation indeed strange and astonishing, but with that advantage of clearest evidence, though by human record transmitted to after-ages, as could almost be sought for the furthest moral certainty of any matter of fact, and may cause this take deeper impression on our spirits, even in this present time, if we seriously consider, 1. That the account hereof (which by no party within the church then, or in after-times was called in question) was in a solemn address after prayer, by the emperor to God, for revealing of himself to him, when he was doubtful and solicitous, to know the true object of his adoration, being then no Christian, though he had some respects to that way, from his father *Constantine's* counsel to him on his death-bed. 2. That this extraordinary appearance of the Lord, in the calling and the conversion of the first Christian emperor, hath so obvious a congruity to the first calling in such a manner also, of the great apostle of the Gentiles, the one by an audible voice, with a great light at noon-day, the other by such a stupendous vision and brightness therewith about the same time, the one thus called to go forth and bring in the nations by the word of the gospel, the other to appear and act by the sword against the heathen adversary; yea, to bring the first Christian standard to the field, as a trophy of the Mediator's conquest over them. 3. It is clear, how no advantage thus the Romish church can have, for that idolatrous abuse in adoring the *sign of the cross*, this being an extraordinary providence at such an exigence, expressly directed by the Lord to shew *Constantine* and his army, they were now called to act for the Christian interest; and an undoubted miracle from heaven, to confirm before their eyes what they were so hesi-

tating about as to the truth of Christianity; yea, by such an hand-writing in the very heaven, to shew unto men, that the Heathen empire of Rome was then weighed, and at a close, and the time now come, of Jesus Christ's making himself known to the world in another manner than by sufferings, and taking the fields in a war-like posture, with garments rolled in blood, against his greatest adversaries. Nor was it then the sign of the cross, but a sight somewhat like it, and after that fashion, as the histories do clearly witness; and rather a character of Christ's name, as hath been transmitted in the ancient coins of *Constantine*, and other Christian emperors, in that form, as it is a mark of the name of Christ, with the words *in hoc Deo vince*, viz. *in Christ ye shall overcome*. 4. The vision was not to *Constantine* alone, but at the noon-day to his whole army, which *Socrates* shews, lib. 1. cap. 1. did so amaze the emperor, as mistrusting his own sight, he demanded of them that were present, if they saw not the same, which, when all were enforced to confess, and were sure thereof, his mind was then settled thereanent. 5. We have *Eusebius*, who lived in the very time, making this public, whilst many were then alive, who were eye-witnesses thereto, and so famous in those days, as no passage could have been more known, and easily contradicted, if it could have come under question, whilst the Heathens did not then cease by all essays to discredit the Christian cause; yea, we find him solemnly declare, that ere he wrote the same, he had it also by oath attested from that good emperor: And it is known what respects both *Hierom* and *Basilus*, with others of the ancients do witness for this *Eusebius*, as a learned and godly man, though some few passages of his history, which were more remote from the time he lived, seem to have been taken with too much credit from others. He was assistant at the Nicene council in condemning *Arius*, tho' by some mistaken, as if he had favoured and owned his way, there being then another *Eusebius* bishop of *Nicomedia*, who in that very time was an avowed patron of *Arianism*, and most different from this *Eusebius Pamphilus* of *Cesarea*. 6. This

also we have transmitted, for the certainty of it in that time, not only by history, but by those ancient medals and coins, some of which, I doubt not, but are yet kept to this day; and Sacrates shews, how more than an hundred years after, in his time, that that banner was still kept in *Constantine's* palace. And is it not also convincing, how the truth thereof, with the setting up of that standard was then published in the Roman army, whilst *Constantine* might have feared some dividing thus, and falling off of many to the adversary, before the battle, by his so early declaring himself a Christian, and to provoke Lucinius, with whom he was then joined in affinity, a known adversary to the Christians, if so great a miracle had not been thus public and notour, beyond the possibility of debate?

Sect. 2. Upon this marvellous change, which was in the state of the church, and ceasing of outward persecution, we may have this discovery of the truth and tenderness of the Lord for his people in that short respite and breathing they then got, that this silence in heaven should be but as for half an hour, Rev. viii. 1. and a lucid interval, only to draw their breath a little before a new trial. 1. To prevent a further ruin, which an outward peace and enjoyment of the world, was like to cause in the very power and vital part of Christianity; for it may be astonishing to consider, what ground was thus lost in those few years of the church's rest, both as to the life and purity of religion, which under her greatest wrestlings before had been remarkably gained. 2. To instruct hereby, that no cessation the churches of Christ must look for from war in this militant state, the church being the party alone with whom the devil wrestleth, and then rageth most whilst the gospel begins more clearly to shine forth. 3. That it is not still in the same manner this great adversary will assault; but when restrained to rage by open persecution, then are the most remarkably trying times of the church to be looked for; yea, some more searching trials than before, as congruously suited to the condition of such a time.

Sc. 3. When once the churches were at rest, we see the inbreaking of that flood of Arianism hath its season, and advantage to assault the truth; yea, in a short time so prodigiously to spread, and over-run the Christian world, as it seemed to carry all before it; an assault that struck not at the uppermost boughs, but at the very root and being of Christianity: but then also may be seen the truth's advantage, and the Lord's own immediate appearing under such a trial. 1. In renting the vail of many, to bring them to the open view in this dreadful apostasy, who had not received the truth in love, and might, in the dark have traded more to the church's prejudice, than they could after this discovery; yea, how herein the earth was made to help the woman, such as only in appearance had owned some profession of the gospel, to drink in this flood. 2. In bringing thus forth that famous counsel of Nice, where were gathered most of the grave and godly ministers in that time, through all the churches both in the eastern and western parts, who had then special advantage for a more public testimony, and strengthening of the church thereby, in that greatest foundation-truth of the Godhead of Christ. 3. Thus did the Lord convincingly witness, though it was in another form by this trial, than what was formerly from heathens, how one and the same spirit acted in both, so as the cruelty and violence of this party of the Arians against the orthodox Christians, both in Egypt, and amongst the vandals in Africa; was almost the same length, where they could have advantage of the old adversary the heathens. 4. It is known, how marvellously the Lord did then own and follow with a blessing the witness of a few under this trial, in contending for the truth, to the church's being kept alive; such as Athanasius; when that impetuous torrent of apostasy seemed to over-run all, and was matter of astonishment, to see in how short a time, much of the Christian world was turned Arian; but the greater the conflict was, the more discernibly might the truth's overcoming be seen, which must still outlive falsehood; yea, the Lord's calling forth some witnesses then, with much of his presence

and Spirit to stand and withstand at such a time, was not more obvious, than those extraordinary providences of their preservation, when oft like to be swallowed up by the adversary, as histories of that time give a particular account of in the life of Athanasius.

Sec. 4. That amazing stroke of judgment on Arius himself, the first leader of this party, is attested by the concurrence of all our church's records, with this account thereof, that being called before *Constantine*, who was then at *Constantinople*, to retract his former tenets; and subscribe to the council of Nice, he not only yielded thereto, but with an oath declared his believing of what he subscribed, whilst in the very time he had another paper of his own with him, in which he had writtten and subscribed his own tenets; but coming forth to the city in much pomp with many of his followers, who then waited on him, as he came near *Constantine's* market, which was about the middle of the city, where stood a pillar of red marble, a sudden horror fell upon his conscience upon what he had done, and withal feeling a tendency to some flux, was enforced to get into a common jacks near that place, where he was taken with a faintness, and together with his excrements voided his guts; a great stream of blood following, the slender and small bowels not only falling out, but blood, together with the spleen and liver, so as he there presently died in this dreadful manner, and those jacks do some of the writers of the time relate, were still to be seen then, behind *Constantine's* market in the pork-shambles; and how passengers in their going by, did use to point at this place in remembrance of the miserable end of that wretched man: the report whereof was not only spread through the whole city, but quickly through much of the world, causing mighty terror and amazement on his confederates that followed him. The emperor by this means cleaved more to the Nicene creed, saying, It was now visibly ratified by such an extraordinary testimony of God thereto, and much rejoiced in it. Thus Socrates sets it particularly down, with most of our church-writers, and is a passage (though at this distance of

time) should be still affecting and remarkable, when so evident. 1. How it was in the open view, and most conspicuous city then in the earth, in such a manner as could admit no possible concealment, or contradicting thereto by his followers, so that thus in the providence of God, the report thereof might go as far as the contagion had spread. 2. Its following immediately on some horror of conscience; and though he was not his own executioner as Judas, yet hath it a most visible resemblance to that stroke of judgment, Acts i. 18. where by the Holy Ghost, it is shewed, *That he falling headlong, burst asunder, and his bowels gushed out*, the one who under simulate friendship had betrayed the Son of God, the other expressly denying him, though with some pretended respects also. 3. What befel Georgius the Arian, that violent promoter of this way at Alexandria, is likewise evident from the records of that time, who after such cruelties exercised on the Christian church there, pursuing that interest, being then the emperor's depute in that place, was pulled out of the church by the Gentiles upon a tumult they made, tied to a camel, and thus pulled in pieces, and his body burnt to ashes; and Valens the Arian emperor, a cruel persecutor of the orthodox (for those cruelties by this adversary then seemed to exceed the Heathens) was in battle against the Goths wounded, and being carried to a house near by, it was set on fire by the enemy, where he miserably perished, who had but a little before put 98 ministers in a ship, and burnt them together, for their owning the truth against Arianism, as Socrates who wrote near that age holds forth, lib. 4. cap. 45.

See 5. That sharp storm, though short, in those times upon the whole Christian church, under Julian the apostate, seemed not more strange and surprising, than the convincing necessity thereof, and the Lord's tender respect for his people might be clear, for getting thus some new strength and lustre after such withering and being almost spent in the vitals of Christianity, by that outward peace under *Constantine* and *Constantius*, as from the clearest account given of that time

we may see, 1. What tendency to strengthen more than shake the faith of the faints, this sharp storm of persecution then had. 2. In that discernible advantage which followed, to unite further those amongst themselves, with the more warmings of that ancient love that was wont to be amongst them, which through the abounding iniquity of those times of peace had become more cold. 3. In bringing forth a new testimony to the truth of the gospel, and of the divinity of Christ, even amidst those remarkable essays had been made by the Arians to darken the same; we have recorded then, amongst other instances, that of Marcus Arethusus, who being commanded to build one of the idol-temples he had thrown down, and on his refusal pressed to give but for that end some very small thing, to put some dash thus on the profession of Jesus Christ, he cheerfully underwent the greatest of torments, rather than to give but one obolum or farthing for such an end. 4. It was here also, that conspicuous victory our blessed Redeemer had over this adversary was brought forth in the view of the world, when in that height of contempt against the Son of God, whilst he was deadly wounded in battle against the Persians, he was made to fall by a Pagan adversary, whose greatest aim had been to set up Paganism in his time, and taking his blood which then gushed out of the wound, in his hand, threw it up in the air, with these words, *Vicisti O Galilee*, as is shewed by *Socrates*, lib. 3. cap. 18. *Sozom.* 8. cap. 2. *Theod.* lib. 3. cap. 25.

Seet. 6. That stupendous passage is transmitted to us by clearest evidence, from those times, of an immediate appearance from heaven against Julian's attempt to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, which, in opposition to the Christian church, he then vigorously set on foot, and for this end, did so far comply with the Jews, as by an edict he gave warrant for their setting about that work, and to have their sacrifices there as in former times; yea, that the charge and expence of the building, should be answered out of the public treasure, as *Sozomen* lib. 5. cap. 21. *Socrat.* lib. 3. cap. 17. do at length relate, But I rather here set down the account by

Ammianus Marcellinus, a known heathen writer, in his own words, "That Julian the emperor having enjoined the re-
 " edifying of the Jewish temple, and ordering all the expence
 " thereof from his own treasure, was from heaven enforced
 " to stop, and give this over, the workers who then were set-
 " ting it on foot, being struck with flames of fire, breaking
 " up from the foundation, as they neither could nor durst
 " more adventure upon it." *Ammian Marc. lib. 23. So-*
zomen doth further add, that beside these flames, the very
 earth did cast forth great stones, by which many of the work-
 men were destroyed. The Jews in great multitudes looking
 on with astonishment and confusion of spirit at such a sight;
 so as *Julian* upon the certain account he had thereof, was
 struck with some fear, so as he fully gave over the attempt;
 and adds, if any will but go to *Jerusalem* they may see the
 visible marks of this truth upon that place. Of this passage
 (saith *Sozomen*) we are all witnesses: for it was not in for-
 mer times, but in this very present age it fell out. And it is
 known, how about the very same time fire came down from
 heaven, and destroyed the temple of *Apollo* and *Daphne*, and
 beat the image of *Apollo* in pieces, like to the smallest powder,
 as *Theodoret* shews, lib. 3. cap. 9, 10.

Sect. 7. This memorable passage doth *Ruffinus* in his
 church-history set down near to that time, of a heathen *Phi-*
losopher in a public dispute at the town of *Nice* with some
 Christians there, who had a singular advantage in arguing
 and for subtle evading the strength of those arguments by
 which he was most strained, until one in the meeting, an
 elder then of the church, as the history shews, being much
 stirred in spirit therewith, craved liberty from the meeting
 to reason a little with this proud disputant; and though his
 truth and seriousness in the way of the Lord was convinc-
 ingly known, though with a very small measure of gifts and
 human learning, it put his friends then to fear, lest the Chri-
 stian cause might be prejudged in so public an appearance,
 by his weakness; but he still pressing the same, and direct-
 ing himself to the adversary, began thus, "In the name of

“Jesus Christ, I require you to hear the truth; there is but
 “one God who made the heavens and the earth, and hath
 “formed man of the dust thereof, with a living and immortal
 “foul, who, by his word and power accompanying the same,
 “did bring forth this whole creation, and sanctifies us by his
 “Spirit; and he who is the word, whom we own to be the
 “Son of God, taking compassion on fallen man hath become
 “man; was born of a virgin, and by his sufferings and death
 “delivered us from an eternal death; and by his resurrection
 “made sure eternal life, whom we certainly look for again
 “to be the judge of the world. Believest thou this, O
 “philosopher?” To which, he being struck with a visible
 consternation, under the awe and authority of the truth, then
 in such simplicity delivered, was enforced to answer, that he
 confessed the same, and that it was indeed true, to whom
 that holy man did then speak, “If you believe and confess
 “the truth of the gospel, arise and follow me unto the quire
 “of the church, that you may receive the badge and cogniz-
 “ance of this faith by baptism;” which he did, and turning
 himself to those of his own party then present, said, “Whilst
 I had to do with words, and the reasonings of men I could
 oppose words thereunto; but now, when I find a power, I
 cannot resist following the same, I could stand out no longer,
 but find that man cannot oppose himself to God.” *Ruffinus*
Hist. Eccles. lib. 2. cap. 3. A passage upon such a public
 account, could not easily then by this ancient writer have
 been published to the world, and the place where it was so
 particularly circumstantiate, without access to the adversaries
 of that time to have repelled the same, if any falsehood
 therein could have been evinced; and indeed, a convincing
 passage for the world to know, that it was not by the greatest
 advantage of gifts or human learning, the interest of the
 gospel was promoted, but that the Spirit of the Lord, with
 the meanest instrument, gains more to the church, than the
 furthest of human eloquence.

See 8. It is a grave and weighty passage although in some
 ages after, which answers well to what goes before, set down

by *Matthias Parisensis* in his history, of one *Simon Shurrina* a doctor of greatest note at *Paris*, about the twelfth century, one of singular judgment and learning, and for sharpness of wit, accounted then beyond most of the time, in clearing the most dark and difficult cases, so as he was thronged beyond all the masters of the university with a great resort to his lesson. One day, when he had most subtilly disputed, and with most profound and strong arguments handled that subject of the persons of the Trinity, but not having access thro' time to follow forth what he intended, shewed to the auditory, that the next day he was further to treat thereon: upon which the report going, occasioned an extraordinary confluence of hearers, who were indeed astonished at his discourse, and the great account he then gave of extraordinary parts, so, as upon the close, he was pressed by divers there present, that his discourse then might be put in writ, and published to the world; wherewith he was so puffed up, as in the dreadful manner of blasphemous insolence, he brake forth thus, "O Jesus Jesus, (*though this in a contemptible manner was expressed*) how much have I in this question confirmed and exalted thy laws! but if I please to oppose myself thereunto, "I know, how with stronger arguments, as much to weaken and depress the same:" Which no sooner spoken, than he was presently struck dumb, that for the time he could speak no more; and not only thus, but became a most notorious idiot, so as he could neither read, nor know what was spoken to him in any rational way, and became as public an object of derision, as he had before been almost of men's adoration. This is at length by that historian set down *Matth. Par. Chron.* 121. p. 198. with these two convincing remarks also, which are there held forth; 1. That at this time school-theology wholly was turned to be a matter of wit, and subtle disputing, for ostentation, but not to edify; whilst by such a stupendous providence and in so public a place, the Lord put such a mark on one who was of greatest repute then in that way. The second doth shew some effects it had upon many scholars in that age, not only to enforce a conviction of the

truth of Christian religion, but to suppress the arrogance and insolent boastings, which in many then was too discernible, as if the doctrine of the Scripture stood or fell by their reasonings.

Sett. 9. We may see a most convincing appearance of the Lord, recorded by our ecclesiastic writers, for Theodosius that good emperor, who, after Julian, was given as a blessing then to the church; how, in his war against the tyrant Eugenius, with whom Arbogastus, the chief leader of his forces, had conspired against Valentinian the second, and caused strangle him in his bed; being sore straitened in fight, and like to succumb, did then before his army turn himself to God by prayer for some evidence of his present help; whereupon such a mighty tempest of wind was sent, and blew so vehemently in the face of Eugenius' army, as their darts were ranversed, and turned back by the violence of the wind, in their own faces, and the enemy broke, and Eugenius being hardly pursued, fled in to the emperor himself, falling down on his knees for relief; but such was the hot and eager pursuit of the soldiers, as he was instantly killed, and Arbogastus slew himself. This Socrates sets down, *lib.* 5. *cap.* 23. Of which miraculous appearance of the Lord, the poet Claudian hath these verses.

O nimium dilecte Deo! cui fundit ab antris

Æolus armatas acies, cui militat aether

Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.

In which passage we may see, what remarkable difference, by the immediate appearance of God, for confirming his truth, was made obvious to the world, betwixt a Theodosius and a Julian.

Sett. 10. We see in this time of the church's renewed calm and peace, after Julian's being taken out of the way, those sore intestine troubles and conflicts which then brake up: yea, the depths of Satan in his working by a spirit of error some further length than before, not only by the Arian party, in denying the Deity of our blessed Lord, but by those dreadful tenets of Pelagianism, which then began to appear

in opposing his grace, merit and satisfaction, and a poison that did more subtilly diffuse itself through the vital parts of the church. We may convincingly see also, that special tender care of the church's head over her, and for securing his truth in such cloudy times; 1. By raising up then those excellent lights, with gifts and endowments suitable to the service of the time, for contending against those adversaries, such as Augustine, Hierom, Basilus Magnus, Prosper, and Gregory Nazianzen, as we may see clear from our church-histories; yea, whilst in after-ages this horrid poison of Pelagianism was continued, we find a Bradwardine that great light then raised up. 2. It was also obvious for the church's confirming, how this sad declining from the truth and corruption in doctrine, and a declining in the practice and power thereof, did not only break up, but had their growth and advance together, so as each serious observer might see whence those errors had their true rise and strength. 3. But the truth then had that advantage, that the spirit of error, breaking thus up, and making such formidable approaches, was not more discernible, than its being expressly foretold by the Holy Ghost in the word, *That such a departing from the faith, and giving heed to seducing spirits, was to be looked for in those times, 1 Tim. iv. 1. and such a trial was to follow the church under the New Testament, of grievous wolves entering, who should not spare the flock, yea, come that length in falling off from the truth, as to deny the Lord that bought them.*

Sect. 11. It is most remarkable and confirming, what we see in the state of the Jews after their dispersion, now in the times of the gospel, how this people, who would not embrace the true Messiah Jesus Christ, did so easily follow impostures; and those who rejected the Messiah in his blessed offer to save, were in judgment after, yea often delivered over to embrace a counterfeit Messiah to their own destruction; so as, from some of their own writers, yea the most famous histories of the church in former times, it is most evident, the greatest strokes have followed that people since the de-

struction of Jerusalem and the temple, have been this way which in these instances we may see; 1. Under Adrian's reign, whilst they could not evite the conviction, that the time of the Messiahs' coming, if it was not past, could not but be instantly near, so as upon the least false appearance they were prone to be stirred: We find that egregious impostor embraced by them, whom they call *Bar Coshab*, from that veneration they had then to him, and that this was the star should arise from Jacob, Numb. xxiv. 14. and whom they followed to their own ruin in greatest multitudes, so as it is almost incredible the account that both our ancient and modern writers give of that slaughter, which thereon followed by the Romans, to have been no less than many millions of that deplorably wretched people; yea, how the blood of the slain was so great, as run like rivers in those places, *Just. Mart. Euseb. lib. 4. cap. 6. Buxtorf. Syn. Jud. cap. 36. Carion lib. 3. Chronic.* 2. We have that memorable passage to witness this also, of their Moses Cretensis, one who appeared amongst them about the third century, giving out, that he was sent to take them through the sea to their own land, as of old Israel was under Moses' leading, and for a year together, made it his work through the towns of that island of Crete, where he most appeared, to persuade them hereof; that they should quit their estates and possessions, to follow him, giving greatest assurances that they should be carried safe, and without wetting the sole of their foot through the sea, for which he set them a day to accomplish this; whereupon that poor people, eager and confident herein, came with their wives and children in great multitudes to a rock hanging above the sea, whom he there exhorted to go forward, and that without fear they might forthwith throw themselves in the sea; which delusion they were under, was so strong, as divers leapt down, and were instantly swallowed up, and perished in that depth. Whereupon the multitude seeing he was but an impostor, turned themselves in rage to look for this their leader, but he was gone, having instantly disappeared, and was found to be the Devil in human shape, as *Socrates*

lib. 7, cap. 37. with other greatest writers relates. 3. It is known that passage of David. El David, whom the Jews in Persia, and those adjacent places then followed, as their Messiahs in the twelfth century, which their own writers do not in the least deny, and that strong persuasion they had thereof, as made them gather every where and flock with him; yea, to oppose themselves to the Persian power, from the confidence they had in this their deliverer, till they were broken and scattered, this impostor taken, and his head struck off by the king of Persia's order, and the Jews at last enforced to redeem their own lives with a great sum of money.

Sett. 12. We may see of what short continuance some of the choicest emperors for piety and zeal, in owning the truth then was, thus the Lord disposing as more congruous to the church's condition under the New Testament, that their favourable blinks and breathings should be of a short time, as is evident in that instance of Jovinian, that excellent man, who was next after Julian, yet lived not out eight months. Marcian the emperor, who reigned not fully seven years, but left behind him a great grief to the hearts of all the godly in that time, that so choice a prince had so short a reign; likewise Valentinian the first, who succeeded Jovinianus, whose reign, though some longer than those, was but thirteen years, in whom was accomplished remarkably that truth, that such as honour God, he will honour, yea, even in this life; Valentinian having for Christ's sake lost his office in Julian's court, and being degraded from any honour there, who a little after was advanced to the empire.

Sett. 13. In those sad declining times from the truth of the gospel, and that dark night of Atichristianism entering upon the church, we may see the special providence of the Lord in behalf of the Scriptures, that the whole canon of both the Old and New Testament, had been so publicly owned and received by all parties, both in the eastern and western churches, with that universal dispersing of copies, even from the first times through all those following ages, and in the most remote places of the earth, as put it beyond possible

reach for depriving or rejecting the authority thereof; yea, how in the sixth century, by the council of Toledo, the revelation of John was so solemnly declared to be canonic Scripture, and that none should dare to question this; that as the Jews have been enforced by the blest disposal of God, to own their assent, and subjecting to these records of the Old Testament, by which they are so convincingly judged. Thus also we may see, by the no less marvellous providence of GOD, the whole of the New Testament kept and owned by the Romish church, yea, under an invincible necessity, for some professed veneration thereto, by which Antichrist is so clearly revealed and made known, and the sure founding of the Protestant faith, with the greatest fulness of evidence made clear, as they are now forced to gnaw their tongue with pain, to see by the clear shining of this light, their kingdom so visibly darkened, which then they could not but see, even with the first revealing of that man of sin; and when popery had got to the throne, there was then no help left, but to shut up these fountains from the world's ordinary converse therewith. 1. By reason of the independency of the Greek churches then upon their power, where the Christian faith was still owned and adhered to with some more purity, and thus the preserving of the Scripture, and the whole of the New Testament, beyond their possible reach to get corrupted. 2. That still in those darkest times, whilst the Romish interest was at its greatest height, the most knowing and learned, who were at greatest advantage to obviate any such design, and had most familiar converse with the Scripture, may be clearly seen, were such as kept furthest from the corruptions of the Romish church, and appeared against the same. 3. This also (though in judgment to them) was remarkably subservient to this end, that corrupt application, which their own greatest writers and school men made of the Scripture, for accommodating it to their interest and design, having established the conclusion before the premises, their greatest work then was, to have the written word suited to their way, and to oppose the truth against itself; which yet by a su-

preme over-ruling hand tended to their public owning of the text and the letter of the word, even by those false glosses they put upon it.

Seet. 14. It is known from the gravest histories of those times, what amazing signs and prodigies in a more extraordinary and unusual way than had ever formerly been, did then give forewarning to the world of this fatal change, and the bringing forth of that greatest monster of Antichristianism to be near, of which we find the primitive times had such dread, as put many to pray *pro mora, finis*, upon that sad mistake, that they judged the coming of Antichrist should be near to the close of time, because they knew his final destruction was to be by the brightness of the second coming of Christ; whilst it might have been as obvious, that the begun working and breaking up of this mystery, had respect to the first ages of the Christian church. Aventin shews, how in Constantine's time, when outward prosperity began to smile, and great revenues were settled on churchmen, how such a voice was heard from heaven most audibly at *Rome, Hodie effusum est venenum in ecclesiam. Avent. lib. 5. Sigebert. in Chron.* which Platina is enforced also to confess; yea, most writers do all give that account, how from the eighth century for several ages after, what extraordinary and amazing prodigies then were seen, as did astonish and affright the minds of most: the heavens seen many times to burn, the sun and moon to lose their light, the stars to fall from heaven to the earth, most strange and monstrous births, overspreading of many places with such swarms of locusts, and those of an extraordinary form, as destroyed most of the ground, great inundations, as Aventin, Nauclerus, yea, Baronius in his centuries, with the most histories then do all hold forth; so as the most discerning men in those ages looked forth and saw the empire of Antichrist to be certainly beginning, and some remarkable work of judgment then bringing forth on the world.

Seet. 15. Seeing it is undeniable, the greatest discovery that ever came to men, is that of the gospel, and of redemption

by Jesus Christ revealed to us there, a mystery hid and shut up for so many ages from most of the world; and that it is so clear also, the greatest contempt of the holy God, that men could witness, is the despising of so inestimable an offer of this great salvation; can it be strange that such a delivering up of men's reason and judgment, even to such a height of strong delusion, as Antichristian popery is, should follow thereon, which is certainly one of the greatest and most stupendous strokes from the Lord, that ever was inflicted? A mystery, which after much hid working under the ground for several ages, did at last ripen to its full height, and discovery thereof, about the year 607 whilst that vile monster Phocas did then sway the empire. This was the season, when the Papal power got at last to the throne; and that Boniface the third, by a particular grant from Phocas the emperor, took to himself that title of *universal bishop and head of the church*; about which these remarks may be convincing from the histories of that time, 1. That with visible decay and declining of Christianity, both in the power and purity thereof, did the revealing of the *Man of Sin* find so fit, and opportune a season for this; for it was then the going down of the sun, the shadows waxing great, with a thick and palpable darkness every where overspreading, so as it might be seen the outward court of the visible church was given to the Gentiles, and Christianity almost lost, as to any public appearance thereof. 2. It is remarkable what then followed, as one of the first effects of that new empire and universal *headship* over the church, that it was to bring Christianity and Paganism in a conformity to other, and cast that old idolatry of heathen Rome into a new mould by a public consecration of the Roman Pantheon, that temple which they had for all their gods, to be for all-saints, as Platina himself, with other Popish writers, holds forth; and then did ordain that feast of all-saints, which is *all-hallows*, to be kept through the whole church. This was the first application we find of that universal supremacy by the Romish church, with a visible falling from the worship of the living God to such a

vowed idolatry. 3. What sad and dreadful times those then were to live in, which thus followed on the Christian world; we find the greatest of their own writers with such horror and amazement seized, that they know not how to express it: yea, but let any read the records of those times, even of their own writers, such as Baronius in his Annals, Platina, Benno, &c. for several ages that followed; and it is sure, they must read also a continued tragedy of the state of the Christian world, of blood, tyranny, oppression and falsehood, which brake loose thereupon; yea, a slavery more than Turkish, imposed both on the conscience; and civil interests of men, by this pretended popish supremacy. 4. It is strange to read what impression was then upon many of the Romish church, and such as were most knowing in those times, that certainly Antichrist was come: though of all strokes from the Lord, that of judicial blindness may seem most strange, yet many could not get this hid, how such public intrusion into the imperial power, and exalting themselves above kings and emperors, did so convincingly answer to what was foretold of the man of sin, and his being revealed, as Azorius the Jesuite, part 2. lib. 4. cap. 20. sheweth: This was so ordinary to the Romish church, as their Popes took upon them to dispose of kingdoms, no less than of bishopricks. 5. Thus also, in the providence of the Lord was that Romish hierarchy, which had so far subjected the world under it made manifest, that at one time this monstrous body might be seen with a triple head, as well as with a triple crown, and three Popes contending to the utmost, and at war with one another, both by excommunication and the temporal sword, such as Benedict, Sylvester and Gregory, whom Baronius calls a three-headed beast, arising from the gates of hell; yea, whom Platina calls three wicked monsters. Nor hath after-ages been a stranger to this, how two Popes at once have sat on that throne; and thus what a flame the poor blind Antichristian world was put into, and rent in their adhering to the one side or other.

Scd. 16. It was no casual stumble, but a convincing pro-

vidence may be seen therein, that in the year 854, and in a time when most did not regard the word, or know the judgment they were under by Scripture-light, there should be such a visible emblem then of the Romish state, in a woman Pope, a most vile, whore getting up to that throne, to head their church, as Peter's successor. This for matter of fact, their own writers, yea, such as depended most on the Pope, do expressly confess, with such particular circumstances, as shew there could be no possible concealing thereof, though it be grievous to this day their reflecting on it, as, 1. Her bringing forth a child, and dying in the birth, whilst she went in procession to the Laterane, betwixt the theatre and St. Clements in a public street, as a witness against this adversary, which the Lord would not suffer to be hid, but to be set forth to the open view of the world, to know what a monster this mother-church is, and what are her children; yea, with what security they lean their faith on the decision of such a judge. 2. It is known their keeping off this street, and dishaunting it in their processions since. I know Platina, in the relation of this, shews, that it was generally received to be true, without being more positive: But Marianus Scotus, Petrarch in Chronic. with other ancient writers of greatest repute in the Romish church, do with the furthest of evidence attest this, and are cited herein by most of our modern histories.

Sec7. 17. It is so manifest, as there needs no particular instances, but a view of the whole series of those times, to see what a tragic theatre most of Europe then became, and for several ages continued, of blood, troubles, and intestine broils, oppression by church-men, dispossessing princes of their temporality, by a pretended spiritual power, both in the empire and in all places, where the Romish hierarchy did stretch itself; yea that vast expence of blood and treasure, by the contrivance of the popish party, which then followed that long continued war to regain the holy land, whilst, under that cover, their work lay to gain a further interest upon the power of princes and great men, and for weaken-

ing the strength of Europe. O what a visible plague was this on the Antichristian world whilst their eyes were so shut, as they could not see it!

Seet. 18. This special providence of the LORD for his truth in those times, may be most observable, that this great adversary of Jesus Christ should be judged not only by the Scripture and its light, and those convincing providences against them, but by themselves also, and out of their own mouth have so convincing a testimony that way, as from those writers of greatest weight amongst them is clear; to shew that dominion which the holy God hath over men's conscience, as they find an accuser within their own breast, whose sentence and judgment they cannot possibly decline, but doth exercise its power on them; even whilst it is against them; for it is evident, what account these known friends to the Popish interest, such as Benno the cardinal, Lutebrand, Platina, Bernard, yea Baronius himself gives of the Romish church and its hierarchy, as might almost justify Paganism considered therewith, and enforced the world to see, that either the Scripture is not the word of God, or the Romish church hath made visible apostasy from the Christian faith, and turned Antichristian; some particular instances for this, I shall only offer, 1. Of Gregory the great, in his epistles to Mauritius the emperor, what express witness he there bears against any claim to be universal bishop, whereunto John the patriarch of Constantinople seemed then to aspire, telling him, "That by owning such a stile, it might be known the time of Antichrist was at hand in this imitating Lucifer, who not satisfied with what he possessed in common with the whole of the angels, would needs seek after a singularity above the rest; and in his writing to this John says, "What wilt thou answer to Christ the true Head of the universal church, in that day of judgment, seeing that by this name of universal, thou seeks to inthral the members of his body unto thyself?" And again in his writing to the emperor thereanent, hath these words, "Be it far, that your time should be thus defiled with the exaltation of one man,

“ consider, that Antichrist shall call himself god; and if ye
 “ look to the quality of that word, *universal*, it consisteth
 “ only of two words; but, if you regard the weight of ini-
 “ quity therein, it is an universal enemy: Wherefore I speak
 “ confidently, that whosoever calleth himself, or desireth to be
 “ called an universal bishop, is in the elation of his mind the
 “ fore-runner of Antichrist.” This is the testimony of that
 Gregory, who amongst the greatest of their saints is cano-
 nized, and is set down in his own epistles *lib. 4. epist. 28.*
 and 54. yea, is inserted in the decretals of the canon law,
 which Gregory the thirteenth knew not how to redress,
 when he found their loss thereby. 2. We have this account
 by Melchior Canus, a known Popish writer, anent their Le-
 gends, that with less integrity and faithfulness were they
 written, than the lives of the heathen were writ by their au-
 thors; and adds, *Dolenter hoc dico multo a Laertio severius vi-
 tas philosophorum scriptas esse, quam a Christianis vitas Christi-
 anorum.* Canus, *lib. 11. cap. 6. page 533.* And it is known
 what Marsilius Patavinus is enforced to confess in his book
 called *Defensor pacis*, that the clergy of Rome was a den of
 thieves, and the doctrine of the Pope not to be followed,
 because it leadeth unto eternal death: And how that famous
 learned man, Franciscus Petrarcha writing in the year 1350.
epist. 19. thus speaks to one of his friends, “ Let no evil en-
 “ tangle thee, that thou shouldest address thyself again to
 “ those princes of darkness, to what purpose wouldest thou
 “ go thither (meaning of Rome) that thou mightest see good
 “ men borne down, and evil men advanced, eagles creeping,
 “ and asses flying, wolves to be free, and lambs to be in
 “ bands; finally, Christ to be banished, and Beelzebub to be
 “ judge.” But such instances are so numerous, besides such
 as Gerthom and Clemangius, who wrote that book, *De cor-
 rupto statu ecclesiæ*, as one needs but look through many of
 the known Popish writers, to have a clear witness against
 Popery.

See. 19. We see in those dark times, when men grew wea-
 ry of the truth, and were so universally carried off from the

simplicity of the gospel, to fabulous traditions of the extraordinary perfection of some of their saints, and after miracles and visions, how discernibly this became their plague and judgment, no less than it was their choice; yea to what a length, as ever was known in any time, Satan was then let loose, and had greatest liberty, with such a darkening of the air by that smoke which arose from the bottomless pit, as men seemed to have wholly lost their way, whilst they choosed another guide than the Scripture: the heavens so darkened, that they sought another entry there, than by the blood of the everlasting covenant; yea, thought it enough to secure them from going down to the pit, to have the Pope's pardon, and to be about outward penances: yet, even then was the truth thus remarkably confirmed in the blessed providence of the Lord, that in those most strange and extraordinary things they boasted of, all might see, their being suited to confirm such tenets of the Romish doctrine, which could not possibly abide the test of the Scripture or its light, nor admit another seal of ratification but from the Devil, as the histories of those times, and their own legends so clearly shew, by what means purgatory, the mass, praying for the dead, the condignity of works, the use of images, the adoration of the virgin Mary, &c. first got credit amongst them, by having that visible seal of signs, and lying wonders appended thereto, by which now in the event it is so discernible, how those may be called the *doctrines of devils*, as they are by the Spirit of God termed, 2 Tim. iv. 1. not only as they tend to promote his interest and kingdom, but such wherein his power is no less vigorously put forth, for getting credit thereto, than it was formerly for Paganism, as in innumerable instances from their own writers may be clear.

See. 20. Whilst thus the Devil was aloft, and so visibly let loose in this great darkness of Antichristianism, we may see the Lord's marvellous appearing for his latent church then in sackcloth, for her being kept alive and fed in such times, which was no false or pretended miracle, but one of the great confirmations of the truth of Jesus Christ, given

under the New Testament; whilst it is so clear, no human relief or encouragement was then under their view, her trials more searching and sore, than in the first times of the gospel from the Heathens; and their adversaries such for whom most of the Christian world seemed to own a professed veneration; no possible access then to embark with such an afflicted and despised party, as the true worshippers of God in those times were, but at the rate of being a prey to the world's cruelty, and to make ship-wreck of both credit and comfort in their outward state: And whilst such as had opposed the truth formerly, as the Arians, Nestorians, &c. as well as the present adversary, with whom they now were enforced to conflict, what ground they had by greatest insinuations on the civil power, and could not endure that test of suffering for their way; yea, no interest or advantage from this airth had those blessed witnesses, which close adhering to the truth in that long and dark night of Antichrist's reign, is even by the confession of their adversaries transmitted with honour, and a sweet and odoriferous scent to this day. About whom these marvellous providences of the Lord for their feeding and support, was then most convincingly evident, 1. That they had the Old and New Testament translated in their own vulgar tongue, which as Reinerus, a Popish writer, who wrote about the twelfth century, shews, they taught and learned so well, that he hath himself seen a country clown recite Job word by word, and several others who could perfectly deliver the whole of the New Testament, having then such familiar converse therewith; thus *Rien. de Valdensibus*: O how wonderful a teacher is the Spirit of God by the word, in times when all other helps fail! This also was a remarkable providence for a more safe preserving of the copies of the Scripture in such dark times, from any possible access to get them corrupted. 2. They wanted not then a continued succession of ministers amongst them, who had no dependence on the *Romish* church, with the exercise of church government, to which in greatest singleness and integrity they did submit; and this succession of ministers still kept up, until

that blessed raising of the church after *Luther* and *Zwinglius* appeared, as both *Sleiden* and *Thuan* do fully clear; and how two of those were then sent to the German churches, to witness their doctrine was one and the same with theirs, for which see *Morland's* history of the *Waldenses*. 3. How the church then, in her latent and persecuted state, was fed and kept alive, this confession of their adversaries may shew, that their holding fast the truth was in no naked form, but by such visible realities of holiness, and the life of religion, as did enforce that conviction on others, they lived on the marrow and power thereof, and did burn as well as shine in those darkest times, as the same *Reinerus* confesseth, "That amongst all sects that had ever been, they were most dangerous; others procured horror by their blasphemies against God; but those of the *Waldenses* and *Lyonists* had a great appearance of piety, did live uprightly before men, and put their trust in God in all things, observed the whole articles of the Christian creed, only did blaspheme the church of *Rome*, and held it in contempt, wherein (*saieth he*) they are easily believed by the people. The same witness doth *Jacobus de Riberia* bear, That those *Waldenses* being simple in all things, yet through the excellency of their learning and doctrine, had such weight amongst the people, and were in so great honour, that a man would not hurt his enemy, if he should meet him in the way accompanied with one of those heretics, so as the safety of all men seemed to consist in their protection," those are his words, *Jac. de Riber. in Collectanies de urbe Tholoufa*, holding forth that awful regard, which those who knew their way and familiarly conversed with them, were enforced to have. 4. It was also in those sore afflicting times, that the true church had this observable advantage to see some clear continued succession of witnesses to the truth, against the same apostasy of the time, still kept up; so as they could trace the footsteps of the saints before them, know where their fathers left, yea from one age to another hath still been delivered, with some pure transmitting of the same doctrine by some witness, and

public appearance of those who had gone before, for which they then were put to contend. This is no conjectural thing; but beside their own records, is acknowledged also by their adversaries, as the same *Reinerus* a known and famous writer of the Popish church shews, "That this was one ground " why there was such hazard from them, because they had " continued longer than any sect, some say from the time of " *Sylvester*, who was contemporary with *Constantine*, but " others confess (*as he saith*) from the time of the apostles;" which was indeed undeniable, that the truth and purity thereof was more ancient, with some continued witnesses thereto, before their corrupt and fallen church, and that it is sure, Christianity had gone before Antichristianism; but upon this ground he was the more enforced hereto, that the true *Waldenses* was no new up-breaking to own the truth, upon *Waldo's* first appearing at *Lyon's*, as if the tract and scent of this clear testimony had been before that, lost and unperceivable; but was only a more observable increase, and up-breaking in those places, with a marvellous spreading thereof, to own the same doctrine, which had been still in some visible testimony thereto continued. 5. It may be seen in those dismal times, how the church was then fed also by the rod, and had some part thereof of the same comforts and allowance, of the primitive church under Heathens, so as to gain and grow, the more they were oppressed, an advantage tried and known in all the times of the New Testament, how no connection in nature is more sure than this hath been, betwixt the church's most discernible vigour and lustre, yea, her truest growth in persecuting times; And as to the sufferings of those then for several ages, with the sore and violent assaults they had, and the Pope's giving forth indulgences at the furthest rate, and remitting all sin to such as would come forth, and take the cross on them to extirpate this excellent people, whom they dreaded more than the Pagans, is at large held forth in the *Martyrologies* of the church.

SECT. 21. We see this observable providence of the Lord for his truth, by the sore persecution of the *Waldenses* after

they had been first excommunicate by *Alexander* the third at *Lyons*, how their enforced dispersion and scattering abroad, did tend to the gathering of a great number of churches over *Europe*, as our church-histories witness, not only thus multiplying over all *France*, yea, from the *Alps* to the *Pyrenean* mountains, but got over to *Britain*, with whom *Wickliff*, and many others there, did, in the same doctrine and testimony, concur, yea, through *Germany*, with some places of *Italy*, as after by a more public and united appearance was in the kingdom of *Bohemia*, the Lord thus marvellously shewing his being God, in determining those very counsels and actions, for the church's greatest good, which of all would seem most destructive thereto, as if they intentionally moved for such an end, that men may know there is surely a living spirit in the wheels, and an infinitely wise and unerring conduct, in their strangest motions.

Señ. 22. It was a glorious appearance of Jesus Christ for his truth, that testimony by *John Huss* and *Jerom of Prague* at the council of *Constance*, with what followed thereon in the church of *Bohemia*; a passage so remarkable, and those convincing circumstances therewith, that if judicial induration were not a stroke, which refuseth all cure, and binds where none can loose, there could have been no resisting this conviction by the world, that surely it was the finger of God, and his immediate work, when these are considered,

1. How in a time of such darkness, and the *Romish* church at its greatest height, those were raised up with some more than ordinary elevation of spirit, and of the Lord suited to appear on his interest. “*Æneas Sylvius* himself, who was “afterwards Pope, saith, That with the sound of their voice, “the Spirit of God assisting, the word thundering in them, “did awake the people out of their dead sleep, as they run “by flocks to this great light, inviting their neighbours “thereto.” If any question this, see *Æneas Sylvius Hist. Bohem.* cap. 35.
2. That this testimony, even whilst the church was hid in the wilderness, could not get leave to be hid or smothered in a corner, but in the most public view,

where nothing could be more notour and conspicuous, at the general council of Constance, the world must be enforced to see, what authority Jesus Christ can put upon the meanest of his followers in their appearance for the truth; yea, what another Spirit this is from that of the world, which could thus stand, and withstand so impetuous a torrent of universal apostasy, even there where the united strength of the *Romish* church and empire were at once met; yea, by patience and resolution in avowing the truth, overcome their persecutors, and resist those allurements of preferment, and an honourable place of the church, which were then offered, if they would renounce this doctrine, to which the same *Æneas Sylvius*, cap. 36. shews what answer they made, That they taught the truth, being the disciples of Christ, and directed themselves according to his gospel, whilst the church of Rome was departed from the traditions of the apostles, seeking after riches, pleasure, and dominion over the people: Yea, *Poggius*, secretary to the said council, gives this account of Hierom of Prague, That being called before the Council, after he had lien for a year in the most filthy prison, and fetters, and in want of all earthly comfort, where he could neither read nor see, it was incredible to be spoke, how he then answered, and with what arguments, never spoke any thing unworthy of a good man; and at last, hath these words, O man, worthy the eternal memory of men. *Pog. in Epist. ad Leonard. Aret.* 3. That whilst they were sentenced to die, notwithstanding of the emperor's assurance, and safe conduct given, an extraordinary presence of the Lord in that hour of their suffering, was thus also made public; for which I shall insert the very words of these forementioned writers, whom none could suspect or question to be partial. " *Æneas Sylvius says*, That both of them suffered death (*though not at one time*) with a constant mind, and went joyfully to the fire as to a feast, without the least heaviness or discontent, and at the fire sung an hymn: neither have we read (*says he*) of any of the philosophers who did suffer with more resolu-

“tion.” *And Poggius speaking of Hierom, saith,* “When the fire was set unto him, he began to sing an hymn, which shewed his courage, and when the executioner would have kindled the fire behind his back that he might not see it, Come (*saith he*) and do it in my sight, had I feared this I would not have been here, when I might have avoided it; And in this manner (*says he*) was that man rare and excellent beyond all belief, consumed to ashes; *and adds,* neither *Mutius* with so constant resolution endured the burning of one member, as he of his whole body; neither *Socrates* so willingly drank his poison, as he embraced the fire.” 4. That known prophecy of his at the stake, turning to the prelates there present, *After an hundred years, you shall answer to God and me*, was then so notour and undeniable, that upon the money coined after in *Bohemia*, this inscription was put in the one side in Latin, *Centum annis revolutis, Deo respondebitis & mihi*; Whilst nothing then of the event could be known, which so remarkably answered to the first breaking up of the reformation, *Luther's* appearing being 1517, and *Zuinglius* a little before; and this was *Anno*. 1416. 5. Upon this testimony sealed with the blood of these excellent men, such wonderful providences did attend the actings of that party in *Bohemia*, then stirred up to appear against such horrid cruelty, yea, to adventure not only against the empire, but that whole formidable power of the *Romish* church in *Europe*, as would seem almost incredible, if the adversaries themselves were not enforced to testify this: eleven battles fought by *Ziscab*, with the emperor *Segismund*, and still with continued victory, and in some of those after he had lost his fight; yea, with that witness of the terror of the Lord upon the one, and an extraordinary Spirit of resolution in the other, as enforced sometimes the adversary, when all visible advantages seemed to be on their side, to flee at the very first appearance of the *Bohemians*, nor could give a reason else for this, but that a terror thus struck them as they could no longer stand; and at last was the emperor put on such terms, as to suit and supplicate for peace, on which *Æn. Sylv. Hist. Bohem.* cap. 46.

hath this reflection, *What a shame was it, that our age hath seen Segismund an emperor, and born of an emperor, whose name Italy, France, Germany, and all Europe honoured, and whom barbarous nations feared, became a suppliant to such?* Sure it is, the world then, and after-ages to this day, cannot but see something more than human here, and the immediate appearance of God, for confirming his truth, first by suffering, and after by a spirit for acting with such stupendous providences, as might shew there is no standing for the greatest of the earth, when the Lord awakes to judgment, to plead the cause of the oppressed. This also was some remarkable prelude of that great raising of the church, which then was in its approach from under the power and dominion of Antichrist.

Sect. 23. In considering the works of the Lord, and his great appearances, both in judgment and mercy, now under the gospel to men, this may with astonishment arrest our thoughts, the breaking forth at once, and growing up together, of those two prodigies, the forest plagues that ever came on the world, of *Papery* and *Mahometanism*, which, as is clear from the whole consent of the records of those times, did meet in the very same age, and had their first appearance. *Mahomet's* discovery being in a few years after that title of universal bishop, upon *Phocas'* donation, was assumed by the Romish church, being thus no less discernibly linked together in the event, than they are in the Scripture, Rev. ix. Here is indeed one of the greatest depths of the judgment of God, known since the gospel was sent to the Gentiles, such as hath no parallel in former ages; yet such a visible seal and witness to the truth, and brings those advantages for our further confirming therein, as we may wonder how this is not by most looked on in another manner. See, 1. How both grew up off one root, *viz.* an apostasy from the truth, and simplicity of the gospel; yet so as the one was discernibly suited to be a stroke and scourge on the other; and thus see such a fatal conjunction and crisis to be no casual tryft, but where each giveth light to the other, for making this strange mystery more clear and intelligible; how judg-

ment follows at the very heels of sin, and gets strength, with its further growth and ripening; yea, how an unusual manner of sinning will not want some strange and unusual stroke.

2. We see here the congruity of such a judgment to the condition of the time, that the blood and oppression of the church of Christ, under Antichristian Popery, should be closely followed with this bloody oppressor the *Turk*, and, whilst most had turned brutish in their religion, from the pure and spiritual worshipping of God, to the worship of *idols of gold and silver, the work of men's hands*; so savage and brutish an adversary should be made the scourge.

3. We must see here also, how fore and astonishing the judgments of the times of the New Testament are, beyond whatever was known in former ages of the world, that since the gospel is the greatest of blessings, which ever came to the dark world, the greatest of plagues should be this way executed, so as we may with amazement observe, how far those places and people, which hath once sinned away this blessed light from them, as is here obvious, fell not only under greatest darkness anent the truth of God, but from those advantages of natural and moral endowments, which both in *Greece* and *Rome*, whilst they were Heathens, was so discernible, before the gospel came there; yea how far thus sunk into that dreadful gulph of immorality and barbarism.

4. In looking on this strange sight and appearance of both, we see the holy and unspotted judgment of the Lord, in delivering up men's reason and judgment to embrace so strange and horrid an impostor, as is visible both in the *Popish* and *Mahometan* religion; and how nothing is so absurd and irrationally gross, with which a corrupt world will not then easily suit, and drink in, when they have rejected the truth. And is it not seen, how both in their religions, found upon the very same ground and authority, which is a mass of human traditions, with some feigned and lying wonders to attest the same, both following the same method also, to have their doctrine believed, and get credit without access for any further trial, and that under

the greatest hazard, none may question what is thus obtruded upon them.

Sec7. 24. It is sure, the very immediate appearance of God and his hand may be discernible, in raising of this *Turkish* empire, and their being extraordinarily called forth on such a remarkable work of judgment, against the Antichristian world, if we consider, 1. It was upon the very evening of the gospel's departure from the eastern parts of the world, and at such a sad period of time, when they first brake up. 2. That visible blasting of men's counsel, judgments and ordinary parts, with the failing of their spirits and wonted resolution, where this adversary came, so as the nations and countries about, which had formerly another appearance, could not then stand before such a torrent. 3. The hand of the Lord strong upon them for the service they were called about, so as they run without wearying, and did not stumble, as instruments visibly fitted for their work: nothing can be more clear than this is, upon perusal of the histories of those times.

Sec7. 25. With what advantage for our further establishment in the truth, may we now look on this strange sight of the *Turkish* empire, when these are convincingly evident, 1. That nothing can be more gross and absurd, or more visibly tend to debase the nature of man; yea, to expose the very name and form of religion to the derision of Atheists, than *Mahometism* is in the whole of their way, and the *Alcoran* whereon they found. 2. Nor could these ever bring any internal evidence of the truth of their religion, to convince such who would but admit the use of reason herein, either as to the purity and perfection of the rule, or any subserviency to the glory of God, and solid blessedness of men, both here and in the other world. 3. Such was the undeniable evidence of the truth of Christianity, when this horrid imposture of *Mahometism* broke up, as this adversary knew not possibly, nor durst adventure to deny the same, in the matter of fact, but to essay a darkening thereof by false and lying comments; for it is clear, they professedly own our blessed Redeemer, with most of the prophecies of the Old Testa-

ment, and history of the evangelists; yea, own some veneration to the name of the *Messiahs*, though they deny the Trinity, and seek how to reproach the Christian church, from the differences and variety of sects amongst them. For this is undeniable, that the most inquisitive and knowing of the adversaries of Christianity, whether *Jews*, *Heathens*, or *Mahometans*, could never once attempt to accuse the Christian church of deceit or falsehood in the matter of fact, as it is delivered to us in the gospel; yea, how are the *Jewish Rabbies* racked to evade those Scriptures in the Old Testament, that so clearly point at the sufferings of the *Messiahs*, by putting some other sense thereon; the truth of that blessed history of the death and sufferings of our Lord, being so public and famous to all their nation, and before the world, as there could be no possible questioning thereof.

Sect. 26. It surely was no strange accident in nature, but that wherein we must look higher to a supernatural causality, that amazing prodigy which fell out through most of *Germany*, and in other places, *Anno 1501. of bloody crosses*, in the true form thereof, appearing not only in public places and churches, for many days together, but upon the very clothes of men and women, their tables, linens, and such things which were of most ordinary use amongst them, as almost all our modern histories particularly shew; yea, how for a time these could by no possible means be washed off, *Franciscus Mirandula* treats particularly about it, and how not only *Maximilian* the emperor was struck with astonishment thereat, but his seeing them with his own eyes also. It is not transmitted to us what impression this strange thing had upon men in that time; but sure it is convincing and observable. 1. That such, who had in an idolatrous way so much looked after this sign, and made it the object of their adoration, should have it given them as an afflicting prodigy, and this is remarked by the histories of that time, how a dreadful famine within a very little followed thereon. 2. It was under that badge and cognizance, we find the *Romish* church did usually draw forth multitudes, to make slaughter of the followers of

Christ, and made so subservient to their design, for shedding the blood of the saints, as in the histories of the *Waldenses* may be seen, and now are they in another manner marked with their strange sign of *bloody crosses*, which but a very little was before that deluge of blood, after the breaking up of the light of the gospel, that brake forth thro' *Germany, France, and the Low-countries*, and the Lord's giving those, who had shed the blood of his saints, blood to drink in great measure.

Scct. 27. Whilst the dawning drew near of that blessed day of the church's rising, after that dark night of Antichristianism, we may see some previous advantages most remarkably from the Lord falling in to prepare the way thereof. 1. That in the preceding age, the knowledge of the original languages began to break up, and some instruments eminently fitted for the same; human learning did in some further measure revive. 2. Many excellent men of rare endowments then brought forth, beyond what had been known for divers ages. 3. But which should be most convincing, how then *Anno 1440*, or thereabout, that rare invention of *Printing* broke up, as a blessed and promising presage, to tell the world of the near approach of that time, when the temple of God should be opened in heaven, and the Bible, which had for so many ages been shut up, be universally spread, and thus made accessible for the poorest boy or maid's having familiar converse therewith, and to have it at the easiest rate; yea, for bringing forth those works to the world, in defence of the truth, and promoting of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which no pen could ever have possibly reached, without the advantage of such a singular mean given of the Lord for his church's use; so that the thing itself was not more marvellous and remarkable, than the time and season of its being brought forth: Yea, as those instruments of slaughter, the *Guns* by the invention of *Gunpowder*, did obviously tryft with that solemn time of judgment, when the *Turkish* power was let loose as the scourge of God on the apostate world; this excellent mean of *Printing* should fall in so near with the season, and appointed time of the spreading of the kingdom

of Christ, when men should run to and fro, and knowledge be increased.

It will not be unfuitable, ere I pass this, to give in here some instances of such choice instruments for knowledge and learning, who were then raised up a little before the dawning of that blessed reformation from Popery, as pioneers to prepare the way of the Lord. 1. As *Rhegio Montanus* who died in the year 1470, one of great knowledge in the original languages, and who had such love to the Scripture, as that he wrote the whole New Testament in *Greek* with his own hand. 2. *Rodolphus Agricola*, who died 1465, singularly learned in philosophy, *Greek* and *Hebrew* languages, which he with a special respect to the knowledge of the Scripture, did much lament the church's darkness under which she then lay, and expressly owned the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. 3. *Wesselus*, born at *Gronengen*, and of deserved renown at that time, both for his knowledge in the languages, laws and divinity. At his death, as at length by *Melchior Adams* is shewed, when he was asked by a friend how he did, he answered, His case but conform to his age, and painfulness of his disease; but one thing he was troubled with, which was a being tossed with doubtings anent the truth of Christianity: But shortly after, when his friend returned, with great expressions of joy, he said, "Now blessed be the Lord, for all these doubtings and reasonings are gone; yea, I know nothing now, but Christ and him crucified." He died 1489. 4. *Mossilanus* a professor of the *Greek* tongue at *Lyppic*, one of singular candour, besides his great knowledge in the original languages, yea, in those dark times most convincingly pious also, as his epistles made to the learned of that age, can witness: I judge it edifying to set down here, what account he gave of himself, with much seriousness sometime before his death; "Let not God to whom all things are known, be gracious to him in the last shock and conflict with death, if he hath not from his youth with greatest care been concerned to wrong the fame of none unjustly, yea, to condemn the honours, pleasures and pro-

“ fits of this natural life; and hath not made this his one
 “ thing, to have his spirit kept from being defiled with the
 “ pollutions of the world, and given up to Jesus Christ, the
 “ alone foundation of wisdom and knowledge, for being in-
 “ fluenced and watered by his Spirit: this I have had conti-
 “ nually in my thoughts, have revolved in the night, this
 “ with all earnestness I have contended for, yea, hath been
 “ first in all my desires, viz. lest that should be wanting which
 “ was to that rich man, who came to Jesus Christ, (*when he*
 “ *gave such an account what length he had come*) of the faithful
 “ improvement of those talents put under my hand; I can
 “ say, I had no other scope nor intent, but this in my life;
 “ for if I had pursued pleasures, honours and greatness in a
 “ world, which might have been unsuccessful for such an
 “ end, I have taken another way.” He died *Anno* 1524, at
 the very breaking-up of the reformation. 5. I shall but fur-
 ther add that notable learned man *Copio*, who died 1521,
Stephanus Erasmus truly learned in the languages, and a
 special critic, for collating the most ancient copies then extant
 of the New Testament, whilst Printing was but of late broke
 up in the world.

CHAP. III.

Sec7. 1. IT was at such a time, that blessed day began to
 dawn of the church's delivery from that darkness and bon-
 dage of *Antichristianism*, under which for so many ages the
 truth had been in bonds, and the witnesses thereto enforced
 to prophesy in sackcloth, when nothing could have been more
 surprising and improbable on all visible grounds; that the
 immediate appearance of God herein, and its being his work
 alone, might more eminently shine forth. A time when,
 1. The *Romish* power was in its greatest height and splen-
 dour, under which almost the whole of the western parts
 did bow, when the empire and nations about were so visibly
 subject and devoted thereto; and whilst *Leo* the tenth did
 reign, the most magnificent and splendid Pope of any had

gone before. 2. When thus the Christian world was under such darkness, with that implicit reliance on the *Romish* church, as there needed no more but for the Pope to send one of his emissaries, if he desired money, with a patent for indulgences, and be confident thus to get in a vast treasure, as the said *Leo* did, in commissionating *Texelius* a friar, who met with that success, as in each city where he came, he was met by persons of all ranks in processions, and magistrates of towns; the Pope's grant being spread forth in parchment, written in letters of gold, was carried before him, and in that manner received, as the church-histories shew, as if our blessed Redeemer had come down to the earth. 3. A time, when every where the Christian world was so strangely subjected to blind superstition, their conscience as well as persons under the awe and dread of the *Romish* power, and of those legendary wonders and miracles which were then so continually noised, and apparitions of the dead to be delivered out of purgatory; then was that time also, when a standard was displayed for the truth, and that Jesus Christ met his enemies in their greatest strength.

SECT. 2. This may be further convincing and manifest, what disadvantages the first stirrings of that glorious reformation had, and what a strong tide of opposition went against it, if we consider, 1. How this was to pursue a change in religion, and pull men from a way, in which they and their fathers had for so many ages been rooted. 2. To pursue this with so visible an opposition to their carnal ease, and delights in the flesh, to which the Popish religion was so specially suited. 3. When such a party was to contend with, as was publicly owned by the example and countenance of the greatest princes and monarchs of the earth, and had those visible advantages for engaging the world, as the baits of honour, riches and preferment; whilst the alone strength of the reformed churches then, was prayers and tears, and in the naked truth and simplicity of godliness. 4. Whilst thus the reformed religion did lie under that scandal to the world, of the cross, contempt, a low and afflicted state, yea, no vi-

sible encouragements to commend the ways of the Lord to any, but the arms of their warfare spiritual, yet mighty thro' God whilst the strength of their adversaries was carnal, and followed with what in an ordinary way, and, on grounds of human reason, might seem insuperable; so as a learned and judicious man, upon Luther's first appearance, shewed him, that it was unquestionably the truth he bare witness to, but was in vain for him, or any such, to adventure further, when nothing else was left, but to retire to a cell and pray, *Miserere mei.*

Seet. 3. We see, what a remarkable calm of outward peace, not in *Germany* only, but most of the nations about did then tryft with the dawning of this day, when the truth began to shine forth, after that long night of Antichristian darkness on the world; yea, how this for some little time continued, both in the close of *Maximilian* the first his reign, and entry of *Charles* the fifth; that thus the voice of the gospel, in the blessed providence of the Lord, might with the more advantage get a public hearing amongst men, and without that disturbance of the noise and confusions of war: As it was also most remarkable, at that blessed, blessed time of the manifestation of the Messiahs; yea, thus not only the earth's being still and at rest for a short time, but a restraint also upon the rage and fury of men to persecute, until the seed sown had begun to take some root, and a people prepared for the Lord: So as we find no remarkable violent assaults or hot persecution in France, until the reign of *Henry* the second; nor in *Germany*, and other adjacent places, for a time there, *Charles* the fifth being upon politic grounds, and by reason of that friendship he had for the duke of *Saxony*, (but by a supreme over-ruling power) engaged for a little to some moderation.

Seet. 4. It was then a new face began to appear on the world, and whilst so great a harvest was near, the reapers also prepared, such a rare concurrence of instruments for the service of that day, as all might see it to be the work and immediate power of God; 1. By such remarkable variety of

gifts suited to the service of that time; and for what the church then needed, not only to persuade and apply the truth to the conscience, but those sent forth who were mighty in the Scriptures, as well as fervent in spirit, to convince and inform, as in no former ages had been known, since the times of the apostles. 2. What choice and wailed instruments such were, who were thus called forth, not to publish the doctrine of the gospel only, but to contend for it against all opposers, with the furthest advantages of human learning, as well as divine, as might indeed put the world to enquire, whence had those come, when a few such in an age formerly would have been a wonder and amazement. 3. It cannot be denied, but the calling of such instruments, in the entry of the reformation was in part extraordinary, and is clear, 1. How in no ordinary way those could ever have ventured to answer so great a service, as they were then sent upon; or had the least promising appearance of such success, as after followed, to be an incitement to their work. 2. That power and authority of God they went forth with, as all might see something more than human in it. 3. The hand of the Lord made strong upon them, to go forth upon his call, and leave all to follow him, who might otherwise have had such advantages of credit and ease in the world, which, without some extraordinary enforcement upon their spirits, could not possibly be understood. And it is clear, that a greater out-letting of the spirit was then, than can be instanced even since the first times of the Christian church.

Sec. 5. It is undeniable, that such whom the Lord so eminently made use of in the first breaking-up of the reformation, had no visible bait or incitement from any outward advantage; nor can this be objected to them, who, 1. Were enforced to contend with the greatest princes and monarchs of that time, and state themselves in opposition to such, from whom any such interest in the world or advantage could be expected. 2. The doctrine they owned and contended for so expressly, that of self-denial, and to take up the cross, to suppress and oppose those incitements of the grandeur and

outward splendour of church-men, and to shew, that the being ministers of Jesus Christ, was a matter of work and labour, yea, of suffering, when a testimony to the truth called for this, which required subduedness and mortification to the flesh; and nothing thus to commend or make desirable their work, but that it was the service of such a blessed master, and that respect to the recompence of reward, which is above. 3. It is sure, no lucrative design could be supposed here, in embracing the Protestant doctrine and profession thereof, since thus nothing could have been more persuading to Popery, and that way, when such of mean and ordinary parts were so easily advanced to the most gainful places amongst them; but it is known, with what sweet and cheerful contentedness of spirit, those great and blessed instruments of reformation, such as *Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Beza, Bucar, &c.* followed their work, whose outward encouragements were such only as was indispensibly necessary, who might otherwise have had the greatest benefices amongst their adversaries; but as it was said in the *Romish* conclave of *Luther, Bestia, hæc non curat aurum;* They were enforced to see, that it was some greater thing than gold or silver, that influenced such in following the Lord. And what was it that should cause that excellent man, *Peter Martyr*, quit all his places and preferments in *Italy*, when he was prior of a considerable monastery at *Luca*, made general visitor of one of their orders, and in such favour with the greatest of the *Romish* clergy, for following the work of the ministry; and choose an uncertain and suffering lot elsewhere? also *Musculus* that worthy servant of Christ, after he was chosen prior of a monastery, where he had been, to quit all for the truth, and come to *Strasburg* in a mean condition, where for a time he was brought to that strait before he was known, as to dig in the town-ditches, with a sweet subjectedness of spirit herein, who might have lived in greatest outward pleasure and advantage otherwise? It could be no lucrative interest, that enforced *Vergerius*, who had been the Pope's legate in *Germany*, in the state and condition of a prince, and expecting to be a

cardinal, to forsake all his hopes, and upon his greatest hazard to preach the truth, against which formerly he had so much appeared. And, to shew there is no standing before the power and authority thereof, he, whilst designedly writing against the truth, was converted to the knowledge thereof.

See 6. We see, whilst that time was once come of the Lord's appearance for his church, his providence made conspicuous, that the greatest engine which had been to fix the Popish interest, and keep the world under subjection thereto, should be the first mean of its fall and breaking, viz. the Pope's power for absolution, and remitting of sin, by which his dominion over the consciences of men had got the deepest root; upon which *Luther*, that great instrument in the hand of the Lord, was first called to appear against Popery, when *Texelius* kept such a market in *Germany*, to put the Pope's *indulgences* to sale; to whom *Luther* (then but an obscure person) went requiring in behalf of Christ, the grant of one of those *indulgences*, but was rejected, without he gave money for it, pretending the Pope had need thereof; and by no importunity of those that then were present could be persuaded herein: a providence which may call us to these grave remarks, 1. How the counsels of adversaries are oft determined to bring forth the very contrary effects, and *the wicked snared in the work of their own hands*. 2. How discernibly the Lord's time of working is, when it may be least our time of expecting. 3. From how small and very ordinary things to appearance, have the greatest revolutions of providence about the church had their first rise.

See 7. This the world was enforced to see, how the truth and doctrine of the reformed churches, when once it began to break up in the first times of the reformation, did then offer itself to the public light and trial of all, to be known and searched out in what their greatest adversaries could object; yea, this with a most solemn and public reference of the Scripture; and the pure primitive times of Christianity. Thus may all see how those blessed instruments in the reformation, "by pureness, by long-suffering, by the word of

“truth, by the armour of God on the right-hand and on the “left,” did oppose themselves to the adverse party; thence were those famous meetings for public disputation, which at length are recorded in the late histories of the church, where the truth did so convincingly justify itself, with that prevalence and authority on the consciences of men, not only to break the adversaries confidence, and force the weapons out of their hand, but to enforce an open confession of many, yea to a public reformation also by the magistrates in most considerable cities, and this without tumult or blood: As, 1. At *Zurick* 1525, set down at length by *Hottinger* in his *Ecclesiastic History*, with that marvellous change that then followed, in abolishing the mass, idolatrous images, and setting up the true worship of God. 2. At *Baden* 1526, whereon followed such a public reformation through that country, so as Abbacies and monasteries were given up, and their revenues applied to colleges, and such public uses. 3. At *Bern*, 1527, December 17, where the senate and most of the adjacent clergy were present, was that solemn public appearance for the truth by dispute, whereon followed (after by the preached gospel, for some time before, the truth had been getting ground on the consciences of many) such a total abolition of Popery, and setting forward an effectual reformation, as the day and year was by public order in gold letters set upon a pillar. 4. That memorable and solemn meeting at *Geneva*, 1534, May 30, where *Farellus* and *Viret*, with some others of the Protestant church there on the one side, with some of the most learned of the Popish doctors on the other, did in that great confluence meet, where, after much serious dispute and conference, such was the blessed event and authority of the truth upon the consciences of men, as not only tended to a more solemn and universal reformation through the city, with an inscription of the year and day; by a public decree on a plate of brass; but, which was most remarkable, that those adversaries themselves, who most opposed in the dispute, particularly *Chappusius*, a learned *Dominican*, and others, were so overcome, that by a rare example

of candour and ingenuity, they made public confession of the truth. This at length may be read in that excellent discourse of learned *Spanhemius*, called *Geneva Restituta*, and several other writers. And it is clear, whatever falling-off seems this day by many to Popery, it is upon no debate, or by arguments to convince the judgment; but that their greatest strength and advantage is the said abounding *Atheism* and ignorance of this time, yea, that thus profane and licentious spirits do find so favourable a retreat and patronage in that way.

SECT. 8. Is it not undeniable to the conviction of all, how such a cruelty hath been exercised by the Popish adversaries in these late persecutions of the church, as no former times, even under the most savage of Heathens, gives a parallel, yea such, as a most visible incitement and power of the Devil could only be understood herein? instances are so innumerable, as it might be a work by itself to insert, which the most grave and known histories of the late times give account. Nor is it strange, why the Popish cruelty should even be a length beyond that of the Heathens, seeing it was against a greater light, and in a more express way doing violence to the Spirit of God, in discoveries of the truth to their own conscience. I shall but give this short touch, what that massacre of *Paris* was, which went through most of *France*, where such astonishing things are in all histories thereof given, as we should judge human nature, though corrupt, would fear and be affrighted at; how they spared not infants in the cradle, nor in their mother's womb; the streets covered with mangled bodies, and their blood running in the highways; nothing almost to be heard, but the cries and groans of the dying, with that hellish noise and shoutings of the murderers; yea this, where they could pretend no personal provocation in the least: one of those horrid wretches snatching up a little child, whilst it smiled on him, and began to play with him, did kill it forthwith, and threw it in its blood into the river. At *Trois*, the blood of the slain Protestants run so violently forth out of the prison doors where they were murdered, as it run through the channel into the river,

and turned it into the colour of blood; which caused an horror to some of their own way. And at *Lyons*, where most prodigious cruelties were used by *Mandelot* the governour, that when some papists after went into the prisons, where the slaughter had been, and saw such a sight of dead corpses, and in what manner mangled and hewed in pieces, as some had no part of human shape remaining, were enforced to confess, that surely these were not men, but devils in the likeness of men, who had done this, as most grave writers of that time attest; nor was these things in any private way, nor in a corner done, but such as the adversaries could never offer to contradict in the matter of fact. For that late amazing massacre in *Ireland* by the *Irish* papists there, to which they were most pressingly incited by their priests and church-men, it is so known in this age, as if it were yet present before us. But, besides those, let any read *Paulus Servetus*, that famous excellent *Venetian*, though professedly popish, his *History of the Spanish Inquisition*, what could be more of cruelty and strange engines thereof, if infernal spirits (as such those may be truly called) were sitting in that bench of the *Court of Inquisition*.

Seet. 9. That hath been with the farthest evidence made clear, and a truth now of singular use for the church's support and strengthening, that no human power or force could yet ever undo that blessed interest of the reformed religion, though put forth to the furthest against the same; but that it hath still in these late times gained more ground by the most formidable assaults and opposition, than by the greatest calms. Anent which, these particulars I shall in a few words here offer to be considered; 1. What a remarkable issue all the counsels, expence and cruelty of *Philip* the II. of *Spain* had, to bear down the rising of the gospel in the *Netherlands*, which at last, by the marvellous appearance of God for his church there, did most effectually tend to the establishment of the united provinces; and, as it was then observable, how at once the rise, and outward flourishing of that commonwealth, and their owning the interest of God, did most visi-

bly go together. 2. How immediate the appearance of God was for counteracting that formidable and united confederacy of the *Catholic league* in *France* in that time to the conviction of the world; and how all their essays and counsels did at last resolve in their own ruin. 3. I shall here give *Erasmus'* observe upon this in one of his *epistles*; At *Brussels* two suffered for the reformed religion: Would you know the product thereof? says he, "That city which had been most free of those, found quickly such to spread amongst them most discernibly; yea, what shall I say? (saith he) both here in *Holland*, and every where, where violence is once exercised against those of the reformed religion, it tends but to their further increase." With which I would add some words of *Farellus*, in a letter to *Zuinglius*, in the year 1525, which are indeed weighty. *Si unquam sese obtulit letitie, & gaudii ratio propter persecutiones, ejectiones ob Christam nunc quam maxime: nam quid quaeso intentatum relinquant impii, scire velim vel unam rimulam superesse, qua pios aggredi possunt, quam non sunt perscrutati. Verum si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos? viz. That never was there more true cause of joy and gladness, than now is under saddest sufferings for Christ; for what hath the adversary untried? I would know, if the least chinck accessible, by which they might trouble and assault any of the saints in this time, which they have not narrowly searched: But since the Lord himself is for his people, it is enough.* 4. I shall but further mention, for this, some words of that famous late historian *Thuan*, in his *Epistle Dedicatory* to his history to *Henry* the fourth; "We are sufficiently taught by experience, that neither the sword, the fire, exile or proscription, can in the least do the turn against the reformed religion, but tends more to put it forward; yea, how in this kingdom, the more they are pursued, the more their number and authority grows, and rather seems to lose ground when they have most outward peace. It is (saith he) worthy of remark, the report of one here amongst us, when brought to the stake to be burnt for owning his religion, how he sung a psalm, while he was bound to it, so as both the fire and the smoke break-

“ing forth upon him, did scarce interrupt this; and when
 “the executioner a little before was kindling the fire behind
 “the place where he stood, that he might not see it, he said
 “to him, come and let it be kindled before me; for, if I had
 “feared this fire, I needed not to have come hither, but could
 “easily have escaped.”

Seet. 10. Thus hath the Lord appeared in these late ages of the church, that almost no kingdom or place, where Popery hath this day its power and advantage, but there also hath the truth had an eminent triumph, and a public witness given thereto, sealed with the blood of the saints; As that account the *church-martyrologies* give of the fore persecutions, 1. In Spain, where at one time in Seville eight hundred Christians were under inquisition for the truth, and twenty burnt in one fire, with a particular relation both of the torment and constancy of such in many notable instances; as that of *Juliano*, who had been most instrumental to get many Bibles, that were printed in Germany, in the *Spanish* language, both conveyed and spread through *Spain*; but, being taken at last was thrown into prison, where he lay there three years, for the most part laden with fetters, though neither pain, threatenings, nor extremity of the rack, did in the least cause him faint, but when he returned from the rack, would say to his fellow-sufferers, “They depart vanquished, and
 “flee with shame; and at his death, with a cheerful countenance, exhorted those that were to suffer with him, to be
 “comforted, since now was the hour for them, to witness
 “for God and his truth before men; and within a few hours,
 “we shall have him to witness for us, and triumph with him
 “for ever.” Likewise Pontius a learned and pious man, who with great resolution suffered for the truth there. And that excellent young man called *Ferdinando*, a member of the congregation at Seville, whose torments both on the rack and trough he so cheerfully endured, tho’ in that manner shaken, that he could not go, but was dragged into his prison, and after to the fire; besides many others, divers choice women, yea, some of great quality, who sealed the truth there with

their blood. 2. What a conspicuous victory did the truth have also in Italy, those famous witnesses who suffered there, both in Ferrara and Venice, amongst whom was that choice gentleman Anthony Ricceto, to whom the Venetian senators offered to free his estate of some mortgage it was under besides his liberty, if he would retract his confession, which he resolutely refused. Franciscus Sega, and Spinola also, persons considerable and of note there, who thus resisted unto death for truth. Yea, at Rome itself, besides others, we have these notable instances, one of that rare gentlemen Algerius, who sometime lived at Padua, whose relation he gives himself of the inexpressible comforts and joy he had in his prison, it is at large set down in our Martyrologies, was transported at last to Rome, where, after many assaults and persuasions to recoil, he most stedfastly embraced death, and was burnt there alive. Also Johannes Mollius, a most eminent preacher of the word, whose public confession and appearance for the truth, he at last sealed with his blood in the same place. I shall but add that passage further of Barth. Fontius, being called from Venice to Rome, upon the Pope's public faith given for his safety; but after his resolute adherence to the truth there, and confession thereof, was most cruelly put to death in the year 1538; as that account given in a letter to Bullinger thereof, doth at more length shew; as also, that after his death there were many, even at Rome, remarkably stirred up to appear for the truth, and own it in his room.

Sett. 11. We may see, amidst those remarkable wrestlings the churches of Christ then had for the truth, some sore and searching assaults, that almost met at once, both by that out-breaking of that spirit of error in Germany, from the dreadful party of the Anabaptists, so strangely then let loose, and the decrees and hot persecution by the emperor which then followed there, anent which I shall but set down a part of two of Luther's letters to worthy Melancthon, whose spirit was then much sunk under the weight of these: first as to the Anabaptists, he thus writes, whilst he was in Patmos,

being forced to retire. "They pretend to have revelations
 "from the Spirit, and conferences with God, I commend
 "not thy fears; and seeing these bear witness of themselves,
 "they should not be regarded for that; but, as *John saith*,
 "try the spirits, my advice is, that ye try whether they can
 "prove their calling, (for God never sent any, but being
 "either called by men, or declared by signs; no, not his own
 "Son) and in no ways to accept an asserting of their call by a
 "naked revelation. The prophets formerly had their pow-
 "er according to the law and propheticall order, as we now
 "by men; this is especially necessary unto the public functi-
 "on of preaching: and that ye may try their private spirit,
 "ye may try whether they know anguish of mind, the new
 "and spiritual birth, to be exercised about death and hell:
 "if you hear all things from them smooth and pleasant,
 "though they call it devout and religious, and should say,
 "they have been ravished into the third heaven, approve
 "them not, because they want the sign of the Son of man,
 "the only power of Christians, and sure searcher of spirits.
 "Would ye know the place and way of talking with God,
 "it is here; as a lion he hath broken all my bones, and I
 "was cast forth from his face; my soul was filled with for-
 "rows, and my life drew near unto hell: try therefore, and
 "hear not a glorious Jesus, unless you knew he was crucifi-
 "ed." Thus doth that great man write, *Tom. 2. of his*
Epistles. A second letter he wrote, was upon their sharp
 threatenings and apparent hazards of that time, whilst Me-
 lanchthon gave himself to weeping, and in much anguish, not
 for himself, as he professed, (for he knew what he believed)
 but for the posterity; to whom Luther hath these words,
 "If this be the cause of God, and not of man, all the bur-
 "den should be cast on him; why dost thou afflict and tor-
 "ment thyself? Seeing God hath given his Son for us, why
 "do we tremble for fear? Will he forsake us in smaller
 "things, who hath given us so great a gift? Is Satan strong-
 "er than God? Should we fear the world, which Christ
 "hath overcome? If the cause we contend for be not the

"truth, let us change; but if the cause be holy and just,
 "why do we not credit the promise and faithfulness of God?
 "It is sure, Satan can reach no further but this present life;
 "but Christ reigneth for ever, under whose protection the
 "truth now is; he will not fail to be with us to the end. If
 "he be not with us, I beseech you where shall he be found?
 "If we be not of his church, do ye think that the Bishop of
 "Rome and our adversaries are of it? We are indeed sinners,
 "but Christ is true, whose cause we have in hand. Let
 "kings and nations threaten and fume as they please, *he*
 "*that sits in heaven shall laugh them to scorn*; he hath main-
 "tained his cause hitherto without our counsel, and so he
 "will do unto the end." See this at length in Sleidan's *Com.*
lib. 7. Thus we see, how the Lord was pleased such different
 ways to exercise his church and people then, and from what
 airth they had their encouragement alone, when all visible
 props were almost broke under their hand.

Seet. 12. In considering this great work of God about his
 church in these last times, we may see, how not at once,
 but by a gradual advance and renewed conflicts, with much
 wrestling hath the truth's advance and victory over Antichris-
 tianism been brought forward; yea, what changes have thus
 gone over the church, with most remarkable trials and extre-
 mities, that have been the very entry to most surprising en-
 largements of her comfort and outgate: which for our
 strengthening and establishment in the truth, to see thus both
 the Scripture and event thereof in these providences now be-
 fore our eyes, I shall touch but a little in some grave and
 weighty remarks hereof; 1. That the Lord's opening a great
 and effectual door by the gospel to his church, hath in these
 last times so discernibly still had such great opposition there-
 with, as almost it will be hard to find any where, or at any
 time, where these have not kept together. 2: That no sore
 and pressing assault by Antichrist and his followers we have
 seen, was put on foot against the church, but might be found
 in the close and issue to have put her interest forward, and
 for the furtherance of the gospel. 3. Though thus, even

with the incoming of the tide, such dark hours and renewed conflicts were in that manner often, as made the rise and advantage of the reformed churches to be the alone object of his people's faith, and not of their sense: it is most convincing and clear also, how Antichrist's fall and judgment, in the various steps thereof, must be in such a manner looked for, and expressly by the Scripture held forth, with a peculiar resemblance to that judgment with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, of whom he appears to have been a *type*; with these judicial strokes of induration on both, and gradual procedure by one plague after another; yea, this with the same product and effect, not to cease, as Pharaoh then did for pursuing that quarrel, and with renewed assaults, after any respite from judgment, until the holy God do once for all make his power known, as at the Red-sea, and bring forth that blessed victory, when the song of Moses and the Lamb shall be sung together. Nor should it be strange, if most immediately before this, then the darkest hour and most sharp assault from *Antichrist* may be expected; yea, which with some assured confidence from the Scripture, and providences of this time compared therewith, I may adventure to write, now is this time, and present approach thereof, before a greater height of that promised victory, than any which hath ever yet been known over *Antichristian* Popery be brought forth.

CHAP. IV.

IN this dark hour now on the church, which almost every where is afflicting and sad, and so many ready to stumble and faint, it might be of greatest use and weight to bring near our thoughts, and have this still kept in sight, what an undeniable and marvellous witness from the Lord hath been to the public cause and doctrine of the reformed churches, for confirming the faith of his people herein, and convincing of others; yea, how in divers instances the Lord's way in the in-bringing and building his church in these last times, may be seen

extraordinary and miraculous, as I shall briefly touch in these following sections.

Seet. 1. That swift progress and conquest, which the truth then had in this great day of the gospel's triumph, and what interest it got for the fixing of those famous plantations of the church through much of Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, the Low Countries, with Britain and Ireland, in less than forty years time, with which these things are observable. 1. How the truth of the gospel then *came not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*, 1 Thess. i. 5. Assurance of faith and understanding aient the truth, and with that seal of the greatest enlargement of joy and comfort, so as *the receiving of the word in much affliction, was with joy of the Holy Ghost*, ver. 6.

2. That in this blessed way and truth of the reformed religion, now owned and professed, the church did receive the spirit, and so innumerable a company in these last ages were sealed thereby, which is that undoubted seal and attestation from the Lord of his own truth, and the doctrine thereof, so expressly promised to his church under the New Testament.

3. That this high spring-tide of the power and efficacy of the word, was after so sad and visible a restraint had been for so many ages before, whilst *Antichristian* darkness had overspread the visible church; but what of the work of the Spirit was then only known, as a private seal on the hearts of the godly in those times of sackcloth and latent condition in the wilderness; not in any such way, as a public confirmatory witness to the truth, and with that evidence and demonstration of the Holy Ghost before the world, as hath been now since the reformation: after this blessed day once began to dawn, *That the Lord did so visibly rent the heavens and caused the mountains flow down at his presence*, with so solemn a down-pouring of the Spirit following the gospel, as there could be no standing, but cities and nations were subjected to marvellous power for embracing of the truth. 4. That this great work of God was no transient glance, or for a short time; but for many years, wherever the truth came, did most discernibly

accompany the same not only to affect and convince by some transient flush upon the spirits of men, but to that solid and effectual change, as had thus a visible transforming into that blessed image of Christ *by the Spirit of holiness, so as it was given both to believe and suffer for his name.* 5. That this assuredly was above all secondary causes, is such, as the greatest Atheist may see, and how little interest instruments then called forth could have in it; but that it was the immediate power of God, yea, such as even enforced the *Antiebristian* world to wonder, and be in a strange amaze, what such a thing could mean, to see this spreading of the truth in so short a time, yea, over the belly of men's furthest violence and opposition thereto, where no outward gain or advantage could be possibly known, so as to them it might look as some universal enchantment: but then, *O then, were the goings of the Lord seen in his sanctuary full of majesty, and the shout of a king in the midst of his people;* the ministration of life and power did attend his ordinances, whilst the hearers might be seen with their ears and hearts at once arrested under a melting frame of spirit, and as embracing the word with their arms.

Seet. 2. This great witness and confirmation of the truth hath been given thereto since the late reformation, that such a remarkable growth and spreading of the church, and her sorest oppression from men, should so visibly contemporate and meet in the same time, and this to be the very season of building his house, yea, which passeth all natural understanding, when these are so clear, 1. That such sufferings for the truth was not by a few, which could have been judged as some strange and unusual occurrence only; but of so innumerable a company, "Who thus overcame by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony, and loved not their lives unto death." 2. Who were not in one place and corner only, where they could all meet and have a joint correspondence with other; but in parts of the earth of so remote distance, yea, of several nations, tongues and languages, and these also of such different ages and sexes. 3. Of these so many wise, knowing and judicious whom none could

judge ever to have adventured on so visible a ruin and suffering, without the greatest assurances of the truth, and that undoubtedly it was their interest and up-making otherwise, whilst none then could embrace the truth of the reformed religion, but on such terms also to embrace a suffering and persecuting lot. 4. That here might be seen not more of constraint from men, than a visible choice and delight on their part to encounter the same, when a confession of the truth necessarily called thereto; yea, (as it is known from the surest records of the church since the reformation) even to a courting of the flames, that they might get a share of that blessed triumph; yea, such as have been found to shrink, and sometimes to faint upon the approach of lesser troubles, thus raised above themselves with greatest exultation of spirit, to quit wife, children, estate and life for the testimony of Jesus Christ, as is not conceivable without an immediate divine power and furthest assurance of truth; with some inconceivable fight and lively hope of that glory which is in another world.

Sec. 3. It was then, whilst the saints were thus sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, that so visible a fulfilling of that promise of our Master, even to the conviction of the world, was made out, Matth. x. 19, 20. *When they shall deliver you up, and lead you before rulers, take no thought, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak: for it is not you that speak, but the spirit of your father which speaketh in you.* And Luke xxi. 15. *For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist, or gainsay.* Which may be yet matter of astonishment to consider, 1. With what advantage in a grave and serious composure of spirit such did deport, as were then called to witnesses for Christ; and with that evidence of the sensible presence of their Master with them, as made them no less a wonder to themselves, than they were to others. 2. How thus the authority of the truth did appear, even in the meanest of those blessed witnesses, to confound and silence the adversary with amazement, that as the high priests, when the apostles were before them, were enforced to have this remark, That they

were but mean and unlearned men, and took notice that they had been with Jesus. 3. Nor can it be in question with any, who do not shut their eyes hereat, that this could not possibly be of themselves, or ascribed to flesh and blood, but to the immediate assistance of the Holy Ghost: yea, nothing could have been less expected in an ordinary way, considering of what rank and condition in the world many of these were, who, with the first breaking up of the work of reformation, were then called to witness and suffer for the truth: of whom we have so sweet and large an account transmitted, what surprising light, strength, freedom of spirit, and resolution was in that present hour given, where there had not wanted most sensible faintings and fears before. It is a most grave remark, and worthy to be noted, which Doctor Ridley hath in a letter to Mr. Bradford, whilst in prison, which is this, "It is wonderful to behold, how the wisdom of God hath "infatuated the policy of the world, and scattered the crafty "devices of the wise; for when the state of religion was "once altered here, and persecution began to wax hot, no "man doubted but Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, should "have been first called to the stake; but the subtle policy "of the world setting us apart, first assaulted them by whose "weakness and infirmity they thought to have more advantage: but God disappointed their subtle purposes; for "whom the world esteemed the weakest, they found (praised be God) most strong, valiant and sound in Christ's "cause unto the death, to give such an onset as, I dare say, "all the angels in heaven do no less rejoice to behold in them, "than they did, in the victorious constancy of Peter, Paul, "Esaïas, Elias, or Jeremy.

Seet. 4. It was not extraordinary only, but in some manner might be called truly miraculous, that resolution and joy which attended Christians then in their extremest sufferings, and those comforts of the Holy Ghost, which they did witness. This must be acknowledged amongst the great things of the Lord, and his immediate appearance, in making himself thus to be admired in his saints, those blessed suffering

witnesses to his truth in these last times: a history of that import and weight, which brings in a rent therewith, for confirming the church in after-times, and to the praise and glory of her blessed head, as doth to the furthest compense all that blood (*precious in the sight of the Lord*) and forest wrestlings of his people. Yea, where,

1. It is sure none can suppose a dissimulation, or that this could be a counterfeit or personate business, what those choice witnesses of Christ did then witness, of that inexpressible joy and comfort they felt upon their soul; or that such would then cease to speak the truth, who in that very hour for the truth's sake, had choosed death rather than life, and were stepping in upon eternity.
2. Whilst nothing visible could be known to give a rise thereto, is such, that no natural reason can comprehend, as if they had foregone human passions, and that feeling which flesh and blood must needs have of such torments they then endured.
3. Yea, which our nature cannot but abhor, and shrink at, and whilst life is so sweet and natural for all to seek and preserve, and on the smallest receding from the truth, deliverance was so easy to be had: sure this (even the most professed Atheists being appealed to herein) must enforce a conviction of a more excellent spirit, than that of the world.
4. That this also was no product of a distempered judgment, whilst their adversaries were enforced to see, what seriousness of spirit, meekness, tenderness, and bowels of compassion even towards their persecutors, without bitterness and revenge, such did witness in those great sufferings.
5. What rare examples those also were of the reality of holiness, mortification to the world, and subduedness to the flesh, and as a visible transcript in practice, of that truth and doctrine of Christianity, which they bare witness to before men. To give in instances to confirm this, is some way the more difficult, that they are so innumerable, nor can it answer here, where I judge it necessary to be short, whilst the *martyrologies* of the church are extant. Some few only I cannot well pass without a brief touch thereat.
1. That remarkable and sweet account, which Faninus an Italian martyr, who suffered at

Ferrara, gave to some, as he was going to suffer; who asked at him the reason of such joy and comfort he then witnessed, after so many sharp conflicts he had before, and what now he was to undergo, since his Lord and master was in such agony before his death? answered, "That Christ had suffered all those conflicts with hell and death that were due to us, being in our room, that we might be freed from the pain and pressure thereof, when called to suffer." 2. That instance set down at large by Mr. Fox, in the book of Martyrs, of a faithful and holy minister in queen Mary's time, Mr. Robert Samuel, whose cruel usage in the prison was such, that he was chained up to a great post; so that standing only upon one tiptoe, he was fain to bear up the weight of his whole body, and gave him only once a day three mouth-full of bread, and as much water, to preserve him more for further torment, than for necessary food: at last, when he was brought forth to be burnt, which was easy, to what he had suffered before; he related to his friends, "That after he had been thus cruelly used, and for some days pinched with hunger and thirst in the greatest extremity, he fell into a sleep; at which time, one clothed all in white seemed to stand before him, who ministered comfort to him, saying, Samuel, Samuel, be of good cheer; and take good heart unto you; for after this day you shall hunger and thirst no more, which accordingly he found to come to pass: yea, he told them, that he had some wonderful comforts in those afflictions imparted from Christ, as he could not in modesty utter the same. During the time of his burning, his body did shine, and looked as bright as new tried silver, to the conviction and astonishment of all that looked on. 3. That notable instance related by Beza, and particularly set down in learned Hottinger's Ecclesiastical History of one whom Beza, calls that Christian Scaevola, though a mean countryman, that being occasionally present at Tournay in France, where mass was said by a priest, was so overcome with the zeal of God, and against such horrid idolatry, whilst he was lifting up the Hostia, as he went to

him, and pulled it out of his hand, throwing it down on the ground, and turning to the people, said, "Do ye worship such a God as this?" Thus being presently taken and sentenced to have first his right-hand, and one of his legs burnt in the fire, before the rest of his body; when brought to the stake, did most cheerfully hold forth his hand, and suffered the burning of it, without the least visible appearance of pain, or shrinking; and after this cheerfully smiling, suffered also his leg to be put into the flame; saying, "O how blessed a step and way is this, by which I am to enter into eternal life!" After which his whole body being thrown into the fire, he slept in the Lord.

4. I shall here also set down that astonishing example, by the same author at length set down, which was so public and famous in the year 1550, of Gabriel Berodinus, that blessed martyr, who was burnt at Cambray, who a little before had been much taken with fear and horror, whilst a witness to the sufferings of another martyr, so as, upon his being apprehended, did a little shrink in his testimony to the truth, but after, through grace, got such a recovery, and in that manner strengthened in his soul as with greatest resolution he choosed to embrace death, yea, in that manner, which was to be burnt alive, rather than to recede in the least from the truth, which his adversaries perceiving, and fearing that his speaking to the multitude at the stake might wrong their cause, did order the executioner to have his tongue cut out: but after, by an extraordinary, yea, miraculous appearance of the Lord, he did not at all cease to speak at freedom, so as he was fully understood: upon which the magistrate, who was then present, and had ordered this, did severely accuse the executioner, as if he had not cut his tongue rightly out, though without ground; to whom Berodinus answered, to the hearing of many, "That this was not in his power, nor is any way possible to hinder him to speak, and thus to confess the truth."

5. That English Gentleman Thomas Haukes, who for a time had followed the court, but, after the Lord was pleased to make himself known to him, suffered for the truth in Queen Mary's reign, whose resolution and

constancy is at length shewed by Mr. Fox, yet wanted not sometimes a shrinking in his thoughts at the torment of the fire. And thereupon being pressed by some of his friends, as he was going to the stake, that in the midst of the flame he would shew them some token, if he could, how it was with him, and if the fire was not so intolerable, but that therein one might have his mind kept quiet and patient, which he promised, that if the rage of the pain were made easy and tolerable, he would lift up his hands above his head before his death. Thus with much quiet and patience of spirit he addressed himself to the fire, where, after he had continued long and his speech taken away by the flame, his skin drawn all together, and his fingers consumed with the fire, so as all thought he had been dead, he gave the forementioned sign, "Suddenly lifting up his hands all burning in a light fire, and with great joy clapt them three times together." Whereupon there was shoutings amongst the people, especially by those that knew the meaning of it, as the like has scarce been heard: and so this blessed martyr, presently sinking down into the fire, gave up his spirit unto God, in the year 1555. Which could not but enforce a strange amaze upon the adversary, to see what could make such insufferable pain and torment so sweet and easy, as some of those, when they were witnesses to the joy and resolution of the Protestants, when brought to the fire, said; "It behoved to be from the Devil, who had taken all feeling from them."

Seet. 5. It is sure, that convincing seal and witness to the truth of the reformed religion can be hid from none, of the opposition and contrariety of the ungodly world, and spirit thereof, to the same. And thus, 1. How such a darkness is a witness to the light, and the excellency of this blessed way may be known by that opposite and contrariety of the spirit of profanity and ungodliness thereto. 2. So strange and natural an antipathy in acting thus, as from inward principles might be seen, with that persecuting spirit of the Popish adversaries to the truth, so as they cannot be at rest, where they have the smallest access or advantage of power to pur-

sue those, from whom they are forced to confess they had no personal injury, or incitement that way. Let any peruse the most impartial records of church-history in these latter times; yea, let the most indifferent on-lookers speak but their conscience herein, if the most leading persecutors, which have still been against the reformed church, have not been as visibly stated in opposition to the truth and power of religion. And as Tertullian of the primitive times speaks in his apology anent Nero, "The truth might boast in having such open adversaries." 3. Thus was it seen, by what a spirit such instruments were then acted to exercise these cruelties, and with what fury and impetuous violence, as under some visible force they acted, as it might be truly said of many, they were almost divested of human shape, and visibly transformed into the image of the Devil. 4. We see also, when once that great standard of Satan's kingdom was so remarkably set up, for an open war against the kingdom of Christ, after the reformation, what a more excellent and invincible spirit did then lift a standard against this, before which their adversaries could not stand; yea, even in being overcome, how those blessed witnesses to the truth were made overcomers. I shall but set down two instances, the one under the Netherland persecution, by Duke de Alva, of one John Harwin, a soldier of a most dissolute life; but being once enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, so as this change was evident to others, was quickly noticed, and put in prison: about which the godly in these parts were in some fear, considering his late beginning, and what his former life had been; but he disappointed all their fears with clearest evidence, not only of a sound judgment, but also how he had profited in the school of Christ; and when he was condemned, as he went to execution, said, "See here how the wicked world rewardeth the poor servants of Christ; whilst I was a drunkard and player at cards and dice, and living in all dissoluteness and profanity, I was never then in hazard; but no sooner began I to seek after the truth, and a godly life, but presently the world made war against me, and be-

"came my enemy; but the servant is no better than his Lord." The other is that famous passage of the assassination of John Diazius a Spaniard, after he was enlightened by the truth, and at once through grace began to know the reformed religion, and what it was to be a Christian in earnest; against whom his own brother Alphonfus Diazius was driven with such a fury, yea, in that deliberate manner also, as, under cover of the greatest affection, he did unawares assault him, and was the instrument of his death, who, though by the friendship of the Popish party he was acquitted, after he was taken for that fact; yet, by the holy judgment of the Lord, was forced to be his own executioner.

Sec. 6. The visible fall and decrease of Satan's kingdom before the truth, when once the light of the gospel after the reformation broke forth may be convincing and clear, 1. That then Satan's binding up and fall, did follow from such open reign, which in former ages he had under the darkness of Popery, by that prevalence of ignorance, idolatry, superstition and persecution against the truth, over the world. 2. So remarkable a restraint which followed, of such frequent apparitions, which had been in former times, of spirits, giving out that they were the souls of persons departed and craved help from their friends, of Soul-masses for their relief out of Purgatory. It is, I confess, strange and amazing to think what a darkness this was, and under what an awe and dread, by such ordinary converse of the Devil in this manner of his appearance, most of the Christian world were then; yea, upon what authority did the Romish church lay the greatest weight of many of their tenets, such as Purgatory, the necessity of Soul-masses, &c. tho' nothing more evidently contrary to the Scripture, which shews, there can be no return of the spirits of such as are departed, nor are we to expect another teacher to be sent to us, than the Scriptures of truth. But now, since the breaking forth of the light, it might be clearly seen how much these are gone, and Satan's power thus under restraint to act that part and deceive the world as formerly tho' nothing was more ordinary and frequent in those dark times.

3. It is known now by the gospel, within the precinct of the church how remarkably the Devil's power hath been restrained, from that familiar converse which was then under such appearances, as of Fairies, and otherwise also spirits' haunting of houses; so as the ceasing of the Heathenish oracles did not more discernibly follow upon the first times of the gospel, than this restraint of evil spirits in such ordinary appearances hath followed, even to the conviction of the Popish adversaries, since the late blessed reformation from Antichristian Popery. Many confirming instances might be given for this; I shall here mention one, which is at large set down by Mr. Fox and other writers, of that holy and excellent minister of Christ, Mr. Tindal, the first translator of the Scripture in English after the reformation, that being at Antwerp, whilst the persecution was hot in England against the truth, he was shewed by some English merchants there of a notable magician in the place, whose use was at feasts, or when they used to meet at supper, to bring to the table whatever wines or delicious fruit the company would desire, and set presently before them, with other amazing proofs of the power of the Devil; upon which, Mr. Tindal, perceiving what a snare this might be to some, desired, that when they met the next time together with him, he might be present, without being known what he was, and after they were met, and at table, this wretched Magician after his manner began to try his art, but in vain; for whilst he had wearied himself in following all his spells and incantations, and what the furthest that helish skill and power could do, to satisfy the company, he was at last enforced to that confession before them all, "There was one of the company that hindered his work, by reason of whom he could get nothing done at that time."

SECT. 7. I shall further add this great witness and attestation to the truth of the reformed religion, viz. by the spirit of holiness, and how the power of Christianity, and love thereof, did at once break forth with the purity thereof; about which these things may be demonstrably clear. 1.

That with the discovery of that sweet and excellent truth of the righteousness of the gospel, and the doctrine of grace, in our being justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ, (the clear breaking up of which light in these last times, was as life from the dead to the church, after a long and dark night of Antichristianism had gone before to obscure it; a truth for so many ages detained in unrighteousness, that our being justified, is in the accepting of Jesus Christ, as he is offered in the gospel; and as it is in the case of marriage, which consists not in the sending, or accepting of gifts, but in the accepting of the person) how remarkable an enlargement and out-letting therewith, was not only of the peace and comforts of the Holy Ghost, but of the spirit of holiness, so as the freedom of grace leading into the greatest tenderness in the walk and practice of Christians, with these native tendencies, which the one hath to the enforcement of the other, did then visibly appear; yea, that marvellous change, with a new lustre and appearance this did put upon the church, with such innumerable and rare examples of holiness brought forth, who shined in that day in love, humility, mortification, self-denial, and zeal for the interest of Christ, to enforce this conviction therewith, that then was the spirit given from the Lord to his church, and that wind did blow upon his garden, when the spices thereof did send forth so sweet and fragrant a scent.

2. It was then the truth of holiness; and that this was no personated shew and appearance, did so visibly appear upon trial, in preferring Jesus Christ and his truth to the world, and all interests there, when brought in competition with him. It is sure, no weapon hath been more made use of against the church, and hath tended to ruin more than this, that whilst other snares have killed their thousands, of this it may be truly said, its ten thousands; but thus the conquering power of Christ on the spirits of his people, had such a solemn triumph, as that great cloud of witnesses, who resisted unto blood, choosing to forsake houses, lands, and all pleasures and enjoyments on the earth for the truth, may

unto this day be a standing witness thereto. To give instances of such should be unnecessary, when the whole speaks this forth. I shall touch these three remarkable examples, of some who had a great interest in the earth to adventure beyond others, and the more rare, because "Not many noble, not many wise," or of great possessions here, of whom can be expected such a testimony. 1. That famous instance of the Marquis of Vico, Galleacius Carracciolus, who, a little after the reformation, being one of most natural accomplishments, had what the world could desire of outward pleasures, with further expectation of preferment, being the Pope's nephew; yet for the truth did quit all, yea, wife and children, choosing rather to live in a mean estate, and as an exile in Geneva, than in all the fulness of those desirable things that Italy could afford: Yea, upon his parting with his friends and family, when he was put to conflict with so extraordinary an assault, with the weeping and cries of his lady and children, had these words, "Let him be accursed that prefers all the pleasures of this world, to one hour's communion with Jesus Christ." 2. That choice prince John Frederick of Saxony, when detained captive by Charles the fifth Emperor, was pressingly importuned to cede a little in the interest of religion, and to embrace that doctrine called the Intrim, then designed for a reconciliation betwixt Protestants and Papists, by the politicians of that time, yea this, with such a bait of having liberty and restitution of his estate, did with that blessed peremptoriness, which is becoming those who ever knew that power of the love of Christ on their souls, reject all, with this return; "Since the Lord had enlightened my spirit by the truth, and knew it assuredly to be such, there were no less terms, whereon I can recede from it than everlasting perishing, and should thus condemn what hitherto I have owned and embraced as the doctrine of Christ; yea, even to adventure on the sin against the Holy Ghost. And why do you think I am thus tenacious, to hazard all outward interests for adherence to the truth, but that my study and aim is here, that,

“ after this sad and short time of my continuance in the
 “ world, I may reach forward unto an eternal life, and to
 “ that inexpressible joy that is above? I know by some I am
 “ defamed, as if it were not religion, but matter of fame and
 “ repute, I fought after: But would any think that these
 “ could be preferable to me, before my estate, liberty, and
 “ enjoyment of wife and children with comfort as formerly?
 “ And here before God, I bear this witness, and hope to have
 “ confidence herein, when I shall be called before his judg-
 “ ment-seat, I have had no other aim in any public actings
 “ than this, that keeping close by the truth and way of the
 “ Lord, I might attain that blessed inheritance which is in hea-
 ven.” Thus did that blessed hero stand and withstand in such
 an assault as Sleiden doth at length shew, lib. 20. page 260.
 3. It is worthy of observe also, of Henry, one of the princes
 of Saxony, to whom his brother George one of the dukes of
 that house, having a great principality and estate, but most
 bitterly Popish, sent some embassadors in time of his sickness,
 shewing, that if he would renounce the Protestant religion;
 yea, that if he would be sure to make no alteration, to pre-
 judge the Popish interest in his territories; he on that condi-
 tion would make him heir of all, otherwise had by testament
 disposed the same unto Cæsar and Ferdinand his brother. To
 whom this prince gave this answer; “ This is such a tenta-
 “ tion, as Satan gave against Christ, *Fall down and worship*
 “ *me, and I will give thee all things.* But think ye that I
 “ would forsake the known truth and purity of religion for
 “ riches?” Nay, he dismissed them with a most peremptory
 refusal; but ere these ambassadors were returned to their
 prince, he was departed, and Henry went immediately and
 entered into possession of that estate, and restored the reform-
 ed religion there.

3. These deep soul-exercises, brokenness of spirit, yea, the
 terrors of the law in greatest earnest pressing down the souls
 of many Christians then, with that sweet result after in a so-
 lid serenity and peace, yea, tenderness of walk unto their
 death, may convincingly witness that weight and power of

the truth of godliness such were under. It is true the Lord was graciously pleased to keep this much off the spirits of his suffering witnesses, who were then called forth to witness even unto death for the truth: And it might be seen, what a sun-shine of inexpressible joy and light, they were then kept in, amidst those sharp assaults; but after the extremity of persecution had some abatement, then were those inward conflicts more frequent. Instances have been so known, as I judge it not needful to speak much therein. Two passages only I must touch; one of that rare English gentleman Mr. John Glover, who suffered and was in hazard from the Popish party, yet not unto death; which is the more remarkable, that his brother Mr. Robert Glover, who was burnt at a stake for the truth, was not in that manner tried. I shall set down Mr. Fox's own words in the book of Martyrs of him. "I was twice or thrice with him, whom partly by his talk I perceived, partly with my eyes I saw to be so worn and consumed by the space of five years, that almost neither enjoying of meat, quiet of sleep, pleasure of his life, was left him; so that if it had not pleased Christ sometimes to have relieved his poor servant, so far worn, with such seasonable comforts now and then betwixt times, it had been impossible for him to sustain such torments; the chief cause whereof was, that having been graciously called by the light of the gospel, and felt wonderful tastes of Christ's heavenly kingdom, upon some declining of his heart after the world, he was affrighted with that text, Heb. vi. 4. of having sinned against the Holy Ghost; which so wrought upon him, that if he had been in hell, he could not have more despaired of his salvation. In this his intolerable anguish, though he had no joy in his meat, yet he was forced to eat against his appetite, that he might thus defer the time, as long as could be, of his damnation. But though he suffered many years such sad temptations and strong buffetings of Satan, yet the Lord, who graciously preserved him all that while, did at last, not only free him thereof, but also framed him thereby, as he being

“like one already placed in heaven, and dead to this world,
 “both in words and affections, led a life wholly celestial,
 “abhorring all profane doings, his discourse and words being
 “always suitable thereto.” 2. I shall add here, that known
 and rare instance also, of Mrs. Katharine Brettergh, who
 lived in Lancashire, as her life and death, which is at length
 set forth by itself shews, what a singular grave and solid Christian
 she was, to the conviction not of a few, but of the place
 and country where she lived; but, some short time before the
 Lord called her to himself, was exercised with such strange
 inward terrors upon her spirit, as all might discern, not by
 her cries and complaints only, (though otherwise in greatest
 composure of mind) that she was forsaken of the Lord, but
 to the affecting her body, bringing it low, sometimes the
 sweat bursting out upon her, so as all might see what the
 pressure and pain was which she had within; the rise where-
 of was her apprehended hypocrisy, wanting of that serious-
 ness, and being suitably earnest in embracing of religion; yea,
 that she had not so glorified the Lord, especially with her
 tongue, nor had the sincere love to him that she ought. Her
 conflict and terror continued a considerable time, some of
 the most solid and grave ministers of that country, being oft
 with her: but at last, that blessed victory and triumph she
 got was no less marvellous, after the Lord did break in with
 light, and discoveries of himself. Some of those expressions
 she then had of her comforts, I shall but in a short touch here
 mention, with which she was sometimes enforced to burst
 out: “O the joys, the joys, the joys that I feel in my soul! O
 “they be wonderful, they be wonderful! the place where I
 “now am is sweet and pleasant, how comfortable is the sweet-
 “ness I feel that delights my soul? the taste is precious, do
 “you not feel it! Oh so sweet as it is! And at other times,
 “O my sweet Saviour, shall I be one with thee, as thou art
 “one with the Father? And, dost thou so love me that am
 “dust, to make me partaker of glory with Christ? O how
 “wonderful is thy love! and Oh that my tongue and heart
 “were able to sound forth thy praises as I ought!” At ano-

ther time she burst forth thus; "Yea, Lord, I feel thy mercy, "and I am assured of thy love; and so certain I am thereof, "as thou art that God of truth, even so certainly do I know "myself to be thine, O Lord my God, and this my soul "knoweth right well," which last words she again doubled. To a grave minister one Mr. Harrison then with her, she said, "My soul hath been compassed with the terrors of death, the "sorrows of hell were upon me, and a wilderness of woe "was in me; but blessed, blessed, blessed be the Lord my "God, he hath brought me to a place of rest, even to the "sweet running waters of life. The way I now go in is a "sweet and easy way, strowed with flowers; he hath brought "me to a place more sweet than the garden of Eden, O the "joy, the joy, the delights and joy that I feel! O how wonderful!" And as her strength began to fail her, with a sweet countenance and still voice, said, "My warfare is accomplished, and my iniquities are pardoned, Whom have "I in heaven but thee?" &c. This instance I choose the more to set down, that several of the Popish party in that country then, did object this against the Protestant religion, that it had such soul-terrors following the same; but it is not strange, for such as are strangers, to the Scripture, to the life of the saints there, to the truth of holiness on their own soul, that this is beyond their reach or understanding. Yea, a wounded spirit, with those great realities of the joy and consolation of God, by a touch of the blessed healer's hand is no shew, but found to be in greatest earnest, though he does not in a like manner or measure thus deal with his people. Here I must add a passage of one of the most grave, judicious and holy ministers of Christ I knew in the age he lived in, that having been most of the day before in fellowship with some Christians, who were under rare and deep exercise of mind, he lay down at night in some heaviness, and much troubled that he knew not such by experience as those were; but that night in the midst of his sleep, he said, (I shall set down his own words from himself, who now is in glory) "There "came upon me such a terror of the wrath of God that if it

“ had increased a small degree higher, or continued a minute longer than it did, I had been in as dreadful a condition as ever living man was in;” but it was instantly removed, and then he had a voice spoke to him within his heart, and said, “ See what a fool thou art, to desire the thing thou couldst not endure;” and which he thought strange also, that neither the horror, nor the relief he had out of it, did then awake him out of his sleep till the morning, but the weight and impression of it remained for a considerable time thereafter.

4. It may be evident, not only in those suffering times of the church since the reformation, but to this very day, that majesty and authority doth attend holiness, so as to enforce an awe and respect on the conscience even of the haters thereof, and their being struck with the conviction of a more excellent spirit in such (whose zeal and close adherence to the reformed religion hath been also most discernible) than the spirit which is of the world; yea, how visibly those did move in an higher sphere, and from other principles, than upon any outward interest, and that it was an undoubted product of the spirit of God. This was so convincing, after the reformation to the adversaries themselves, that many judged it their interest to have the sufferings of Protestants less public and obvious, since their deport enforced an awful conviction upon all, that assuredly God was with them; nor hath there any time since been wanting most observable instances to confirm this. I remember, amongst other remarks of the church in Ireland, a little time before the rebellion there, I had from a great minister of Christ, who was most instrumental in the work of the Lord there, that as he did not think there were more lively and experienced Christians any where, nor were at that time there, and these not a few, but in a large number, and severals of them persons of a considerable outward estate in the world, who were then brought in by the gospel, most of whom before that change, had been most ignorant and profane: how such likewise was their convincing and tender walk, as they were generally revered by the graceless multitude, yea, on whose conscience was en-

forced an awful regard of the truth of holiness, that was so convincingly witnessed in their practice. And then also, (which was observable) how almost no jar or jealousy was to be found, either amongst ministers or private Christians there: but their great contention was to prefer others to themselves; and in those days it was sweet and easy for ministers to preach and pray both in public and private; such was the hunger of their hearers, their food being remarkably let out to so large a desire and appetite.

CHAP. V.

Sett. 1. BESIDES that which hath been shewed in the preceding chapter, of those great confirmations put to the Protestant cause and doctrine of the reformed churches in these latter times, yea, thus also to the truth of Christianity, it being sure, the Protestant religion is nothing else but this, in the truth and purity thereof. It may be further strengthening, and a sweet remark, in this sad and shaking time, to consider with what brightness and lustre so many have gone off the stage, of such as have been most serious, and fervent in the reformed religion, in these after times, since that great fury and persecution from Antichrist hath been restrained; whose inexpressible peace and joy with some extraordinary glances then, of that blessed estate they were then entering into, could possibly be hid from none, even most ordinary on-lookers, and with these convincing evidences thereof. 1. Of that complacency and joy their souls had in the truth they had professed, and their finding the witness of their conscience, and the approbation of God herein so sweet a feast, whilst they were then turning their face to the wall, as it might be seen, that inward joy and peace did thus far exceed their outward pain, and more sensible to them than their sickness. 2. That surely the ground on which such a confidence and serenity of spirit was founded, must be something above nature, and such as was able to bear out under the greatest storm and assault, as all might see, here could be no naked

shew or counterfeit. 3. That thus, even here, a more near and sensible correspondence with heaven is known to some, than most seem to be aware of; yea, such as (except men shut their eyes) it might be easy to discern, how these, when dying, have had the vail in an extraordinary manner drawn by, and been admitted to some sight of that, which themselves could not possibly express, and to know something of an actual possession, and those foretastes of the glory they were entering into, than can be conceived at a distance: 4. How discernible this abundant entrance, and fulness of peace enjoyed in the dying hour of the saints, hath followed their close adherence to the way of the Lord, and the Protestant doctrine now under such reproach.

It is true, that not in a like manner is the Lord's dealing with the choicest of his people, but such who have shined brightly in their day, may go off the stage silent and with little appearance. I have known some, of whom I write this with the greatest certainty, how their continued work and practice did speak to all, the truth of serious godliness, the blessed finishing of whose course hath some discernible restraint as to any such appearance then; whilst the Lord's condescending with such a visible gale of sense, and triumphing joy to others in the close of their life, may be understood more with respect to some public use and import, than for themselves, as a dying testimony and seal of the saints to the truth. And I hope this may be for advantage and edification, to set down here some special and weighty instances to commend the blessed way of the Lord, and for confirming others therein; whose last testament and dying breath (whilst their words are of more weight than at other times) did solemnly witness to this truth and faithfulness, by putting their seal thereto: Yea, such instances, as the world may see, and have the conviction hereof enforced by this short touch, what is that blessed fruit and gain, which follows upon serious godliness, when once it comes to an acting the last scene of death; what another appearance these have, and that here must be something above nature; yea, what

rare endowments and parts these had, as well as piety, who with such sweet and odoriferous fragrancy hath their remembrance thus transmitted; that we may see also, what choice and excellent persons have followed, and been brought forth since the reformation from Popery, of such various degrees and employments, bearing one and that same witness to the truth. Some of which I have choosed to insert here, are out of Melchior Adamus a grave writer, being in the Latin, and these books so rare, as might be little known or accessible to the most; for these other passages which follow, I may with confidence say, I have been to the furthest concerned about the certainty thereof, as shall be more particularly shewed.

Sect. 2. First instance set down, is that notable German physician, Joachimus Curæus, born in Freastadt, who died *Anno* 1573. a man, as of choice and singular piety, was of a great learning also, had his days shortened by a burning fever, in which, as in the whole of his former life, did appear the subjectedness of his soul, yet with most fervent breathings of love towards Christ, (and as its usually found) a most sweet concord here betwixt the conclusion and premises of his former walk and practice. Amongst many remarkable speeches he then had, and are at length recorded by Melchior Adamus, these I shall here mention. "I am oppressed, " Lord, but to me it is enough, that thy hand hath done it; " my body now suffers because of sin, but my soul is raised " and comforted with the assurance of eternal life: But I " will wrestle with Jacob until the brightness of thy light " appear to me. Come, Lord Jesus, and let all that love " thee, say, come, and he that loves the not, let him be A- " nathema Maranatha. Thou knowest who searcest the " the heart, I love thee, with thee I shall be at the begin- " ning of this new year, and satisfied with thy sight, and " drink of the wine of that everlasting joy in thy Father's " house, where there are many mansions, and one also is for " me there." And then had these words, which I choose rather to set down in the Latin, having such a sweet empha-

sis there. *Jam meum pectus ardet conspectu vitæ æternæ, cujus*
vere sentio in me initia. "I have learned to know thee, and
 " with some aim to have others know thee aright, Son of
 " God, acknowledge me also, and take me into thy embrace-
 " ments. To come to thee, my soul with desire leaps for
 " joy, and because it is yet with-held, I think the time long;
 " I desire to be dissolved. O dissolve me, that I may be
 " with thee, I am overwearied here, I groan for that dwell-
 " ing above, thou which hast revealed to me, as the travel-
 " ling man in a dark night looks for the sun; so do I ear-
 " nestly look after the brightness of that light, which is in
 " the sight of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Now when
 " my breath and spirits are to fail, let, O blessed Saviour,
 " thy Spirit speak and interceed in my soul for me with un-
 " utterable groans. I shall see my Saviour in the flesh,
 " which is exalted at the right-hand of the Father, and there
 " bless him for all the blessings I have had from him. Thou
 " wilt also put a guard to this body, even thy holy angels to
 " keep my dust and bones, which were, and shall be for ever
 " the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost; for it is impossi-
 " ble this flesh and mass of my body, which hath been
 " quickened by the outletting and communion of the Spirit,
 " and thus ingrafted into the body of Christ, to be annihi-
 " late, or to be for ever continued in the state of death, as a
 " dead mass: But thou the fountain of life shalt require from
 " the earth this thine own image, even out of the smallest
 " crumbs of dust and ashes that are there, and by sending
 " forth thy Spirit again, build up this a glorious and living
 " body, that it may be for a dwelling for thy divinity to
 " dwell in for ever. There we shall follow the Lamb wher-
 " ever he goes. With these words which he adds, *O vere*
 " *pulchrum ducem & divinum.* There we shall sing a new
 " song. Let us rejoice, hallelujah. O come let us go forth
 " to meet our Redeemer. *Our conversation is in heaven;* but
 " even in this life we must begin to know an eternal life,
 " and follow in that order Christ hath appointed. We shall
 " be clothed upon, and not found naked; and he who is the

"beloved Lamb of God, *who takes away the sins of the world,*
 "*shall lead us to the fountains of living waters, and take all tears*
 "*from our eyes.* What the eye hath not seen, nor the ear
 "heard, nor hath entered into the hearts of men, is prepar-
 "ed for the lovers of God. This earthly life is but death,
 "but that is life indeed, which Christ hath begun in my
 "soul; and now I live, *not I, but Christ liveth in me,* there-
 "fore I will praise him. O blessed soul, where Jesus Christ
 "hath his seat, doth lead and rule in all our motions and
 "actions. I see the heavens now open. *Now let thy ser-*
 "*vant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*
 "Thou Jesus Christ art my resurrection and life. *How lovely*
 "*are thy tabernacles, O Redeemer?* Keep my soul, that it suffer
 "not hurt from that horrible dragon the Devil, let it be
 "bound up in the bundle of the living, and my journey be
 "to those who now live an immortal and heavenly life."

Thus is there in part, a touch of the breathings of that
 blessed man before his close, which the witnesses thereof shew
 was but some part of what he expressed, and this with great-
 est candour and fervency. And said again a little before his
 close: "I die in the Lord, who is my life, and in the ac-
 "knowledgment, faith and recumbence on Jesus Christ.
 "O sweet glory and desirable righteousness! O pleasant
 "change and translation from sin, into a state of holiness,
 "from darkness into light, and from death into life!" It was
 observed, that he had divers words propheticall, whereof
 many choice and faithful witnesses were then present, who
 declared also, that they were exceedingly comforted by him;
 but needed not comfort him, in whom so singular a desire and
 breathing towards eternal life, with such establishment in
 the faith was discernible to all; and thus at the close he was
 heard say, "Now I die, and have got admision, as with old
 "Simeon. I die witnessing to the truth of the Prophets and
 "Apostles, and adhering to the Augustine confession, bles-
 "sing the Lord that, in his marvellous goodness, had made
 "the light of the gospel to return after such darkness."

Seft. 3. Sebaldus Munsterus, one excellently versed in the laws, who made his study to have his knowledge therein subservient to the public good, and making peace amongst others, not his own private interest. At his death he shewed much patience; being seized on by the plague, a few hours before his close, shewing to some friends about him these dreadful marks of the disease, that were broke forth in his hands and legs, saith to them, "O what precious marks are those which Christ hath put upon me, and how pleasant are they? Do not you loathe at such a sight; for I am now putting on my wedding apparel, for as loathsome as it is, whither I am going to enjoy that heavenly feast with Christ for ever, yea even in this sad dress do I flit to that glorious assembly of the spirits of the just above."

Thus, as it were, triumphing, and full of joy, he left the world, when he had got a clear sight of that which was before him. *Ibat ovans anima, & spe sua damna levabat.* He died at Wittenberg about the year 1540.

Seft. 4. Franciscus Burgardus, a German lawyer also, and fervent Protestant, most dear to Luther and Melancthon, both for his singular learning and piety, of whom that account is given, that his family did represent both a church and academy, so as it may be questioned, whether serious piety, with prudence and great judgment, did most shine forth? Was heard oft to express upon the complaints of some, what hazard then seemed to attend the truth, that he much rather would choose death, and the greatest of sufferings, than in the smallest point recede herein, about which he was persuaded in his heart. At his death did thus also express himself, when his sickness was very sore. "I esteem
"the afflictions of this present time, not to be compared
"with the glory which shall be revealed in us; and though I
"shall now walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I
"will not fear, since thou art with me, whose rod and staff
"have comforted me." And with furthest assurance of eternal blessedness did thus part with time at Wittenberg, 1560.

SECT. 5. Joannes Clotzius, counsellor of law to the Landgrave of Hesse, and after by him made his chancellor, though with great aversion thereto, as reckoning, that the greater dignity had most weighty cares and trouble following the same. One seriously godly in his life, at death had these expressions: "The whole of my life is placed in God. O let thy servant depart in peace. Thou art my sure anchor, my salvation, and only refuge to me. Now the honours of the world, and all momentary things, yea, this life itself is distasteful, in respect of those eternal joys, and that kingdom above, to which I breathe, and with joyful mind hasten, even where those many mansions are." And thus most comfortably rendered his spirit to the Lord.

SECT. 6. Joachimus Bergerus, a famous lawyer and counsellor to the emperor Maximilian, by whom he was sometimes sent in embassy to other princes, whom Melancthon did so much admire, as he expresseth his fervent desires, that the Lord would preserve such an instrument for his church, of whom that account is given. His religion was a soul-work and business to him, nor did he satisfy himself with a form of duty, but oft might be seen pouring out his heart unto God in prayer, with many tears in his family, a rare instance of one in such throng of public employments. He was much in converse with the Scripture, not to know it only for light, but to conform himself thereto as the rule. He used to have these words frequently to others, "That one's time should be much, either in speaking with God by prayer, or have him speaking to us, by reading and meditation, which he had drunk in from his youth." Of singular humility, as a few weeks before his death he declared, "That besides some desire to renounce the world, he designed to die a capital enemy, above all things, to that sin of pride. And whilst on his death-bed, with greatest assurance, he looked out for his change, using those words of Job, *I wait till my change come*, as one who seemed to have no more to do then, but to die, having been so serious in making ready for it in his former life. This account is given of his words,

“ Though I be most weak and destitute of outward help, I
 “ am one of the sheep of Christ, whom Satan by all his
 “ power shall never be able to pluck out of his hand; and
 “ was sure, that no created thing could ever be able to pluck
 “ out of his hand; and was sure, that no created thing could
 “ ever be able to separate him from the love of Christ, with
 “ which he was so firmly united.” He had that word, as
 most comforting to him. *He is my life, and the length of my
 days*, Deut. xxx. 20. And then after said, “ Farewell, O
 “ farewell all earthly things, and welcome heaven. Let
 “ none hereafter make mention of the things of this world to
 “ me.” And to some of his friends, who were by, did seriously
 witness, “ He never through the blessing of God was
 “ more firmly persuaded of the truth, nor had ever found
 “ the Spirit of the Lord bearing a more full and comforting
 “ testimony to his soul for his adherence to the truth, than
 “ at that present time; so as now he found it easy, and was
 “ in case, if he were called thereto, to lay down his life as a
 “ martyr upon that account, which was not easy to him be-
 “ fore; and withal, witnessed his inward joy, and sense of
 “ the Lord’s tenderness to him at such a time, to demit him
 “ out of this prison, when so dreadful things seemed immi-
 “ nent upon the country and place he lived in.” Thus died
 that excellent man, leaving a sweet savour behind to all who
 knew him, *Anno* 1602.

Seet. 7. Gasper Peuterus, son in law to Melancthon, and a most
 famous physician in that time, was a man of great learning
 and piety, and in the blessed disposal of the Lord exposed to
 much suffering upon the sacramental controversy with the Lu-
 therans, which how sad soever to him in the time, did at last
 resolve in much joy, and being strengthened in the way of
 the Lord thereby. He was kept for many years in prison on
 that account, where he was forced to see his profiting more
 in the knowledge and love of the truth, than in all his for-
 mer liberty, having been of an high and lofty spirit, until
 thus he was under the cross broken and subdued, so as he
 bare that testimony, *It was good for him that the Lord had af-*

afflicted him. In his prison he met with hard usage, and expecting his change by death, his body being spent, and brought very low, he wrote his testament, as is at large (and truly edifying) the account thereof set down by Melchior Adamus, where he owns the innocency of his cause, exhorts his children to godliness, and love amongst themselves, having, amongst others, these words, as an enforcement from his own practice: "I commend my soul, and the whole of me with daily groanings to God, through, and for his Son Jesus Christ my Lord; in confessing of whom, by the help of his Spirit, I hope to continue, live and die, waiting for the coming of our great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ;" shews also, That during his imprisonment, with a blessing from the Lord for it, how he had been kept still unmoved, with all their threatenings of death, or continued restraint. And when he called to mind the death of his choice wife, from whom he was kept, so as he could not have access to see her at her death, which affected him with much grief, he said, the considering of these words of Christ, *that he who forsakes not father and mother, wife and children for his sake, is not worthy of him*, did much help to subdue, and bound his affections herein; he after experienced the Lord's marvellous providence both in his delivery, and comfort of his after lot.

Outliving these sufferings 16 years, and attained to greater honour and respect than ever before, so as he could seal the verification of that truth, *of the Lord's making glad his people according to the days wherein he had afflicted them, and years wherein they had seen evil.* He died Anno 1602. with a most sweet refreshing testimony to all present, of his assured hope and comfort in the Lord.

Sect. 8. Fredericus Taubmanus born Anno 1565. was a man of great learning and piety, which made him to be an ornament to the profession of the truth in the place and time he lived; was also much exercised for confirming himself in the way of God, not only in the public hearing of the word, but in those more secret duties, reading, meditation and fervent prayer. He had some clear discerning of his approach-

ing death, whereupon he said to his friends, "This I do not fear, let my God call when he will, I desire to obey, I know he will never forsake me." And under his sickness, when it came upon him, and whilst his disease began to increase, to some then who were exhorting him to patience, he said, "God is faithful, whom I have before now tried, and at this hour have no cause to bring his truth into question. Let his blessed will concerning me take place." In the evening before his death, being asked what he was doing, he answered, "I lie here, I am wrestling with my Lord Jesus Christ after Jacob's example, and resolve not to let him go, till he give the blessing."

Secl. 9. Matthias Vessenbechius, famous for learning and knowledge of the laws, which was his profession, a fervent Protestant, and remarkably called to the knowledge of the truth, when he studied at the university of Lovain, by being a witness to the sufferings of a poor godly man in that place for the truth, which put him after to a serious search of the Scripture, had a marvellous delight in a special way to read much of the Psalms, and upon the New Testament; a great opposite to the litigious wranglings of the law, and to have truth and righteousness in that employment promoted. At his death did witness much peace and comfort, having oft in his mouth these words of the apostle, 2 Cor. i. 22. *Who hath confirmed us, and given us the seal of the Spirit, by which we cry Abba Father; and that in Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?* Adding the following words as his confidence, that this was insured through Jesus Christ; he said also to those that were present, with great assurance, "That now the Lord had given him a sight of that blessed place of eternal joy, and where he would be quickly, which was his greatest longing to have it hastened." And with his last breathing almost, had these words, "He was within the covenant with Jesus Christ." He died *Anno 1556*, professor of the law at Wittenberg.

Secl. 10. Jacobus Zunigerus, a famous German professor

of medicine at Basil, and ornament, not only to the university, and his profession as a physician, but to the truth in a most convincing Christian walk, was plucked away in the time of a great pestilence, which was at Basil, whilst he made it his work to be useful at that time to others. The first touch of his disease was quickly discerned by him, and that his change would quickly follow upon it, so as his business was wholly about his inward state; and as one panting after a better life, had once and again these words to his friends. "I rejoice, yea, my spirit leaps within me for joy, that now the time is at last come, when I shall see the glorious God face to face, whose glory with wondering I have oft got some glance of here, in the search of natural things, whom I have worshipped, whom I have by faith longed after, and after whom my soul hath panted."

And whilst his pain, through the malignity of the disease, was very grievous, he did express greatest patience and composure of spirit, having these words of Job, *Though he should kill me, I will trust in him*; and only did often groan forth his desire, that Jesus Christ would come and hasten his escape, so as all who looked on, might see him dying, and overcoming in such a sharp conflict at once. He died *Anno* 1610.

SECT. II. Olympia Fulvia Morata an Italian, born at Ferrara, and bred at the court there with the young princefs, who was the duke's daughter, of a singular spirit for learning, besides her other excellent endowments, so as she could both write and speak most elegant Latin and Greek in her very young years; but then, by reason of her education, and the place of her abode, wholly popish, was at last bereft of her father, who had a public charge under the duke there, with some visible withdrawing after, of that wonted respect she had in that court; in the blessed providence of the Lord for her good, though upon the account given of her life, she was such a person as enforced a conviction upon all that knew her, not only of excellent natural endowments, but of her modest, prudent, and virtuous deport in the place she lived,

which, through the good hand of the Lord, did occasion a learned German physician then at Ferrara, a serious Protestant, to propose marriage with her, and thus was the occasion of her withdrawing from that country, and to leave her father's house. Her husband, with whom she was then engaged, returning within a little to his own country, where she gave herself most to study the Scripture, to which before she was wholly a stranger, and had accounted it hazardous to converse with, the Lord thus breaking in upon her with the light and knowledge of the truth, that in the short time of her life after, it was not only the Protestant religion she then embraced, but in greatest earnest followed the power and truth thereof; so as only her delight and comfort was in converse with divine things.

In a letter she writes to that young prince, with whom she was bred at Ferrara, which, among some other things she had writ, was after her death published; She hath these words: "So soon as by the singular goodnefs of the Lord
 "to me, I had got out from idolatry to my own country,
 "and gone with my husband to Germany, it may seem incredible to you, what a change the Lord then made upon
 "my spirit, that the former aversion I had to read the Scripture, from which I had kept so great a distance, was then
 "turned to have this my greatest delight and pleasure in the
 "world; and now my soul is most taken up therewith: and
 "there I may say is my only comfort and pleasure, about
 "which my study, work and care I have placed, so as the
 "world, and the pleasures and delights therein, which once
 "I was wont to admire, and too much taken with, are become wholly contemptible with me." That short time of her abode with her husband in Germany before her death, was almost a continued conflict with renewed trials they met with in their private lot, being tossed from several places by reason of the wars, her husband taken by some popish soldiers, and in much hazard of his life, which was one of the sharpest conflicts she had in her time, upon any outward account, there being very great love betwixt them, so as for a little

she was almost crushed; but the Lord, who heard her groans, by a remarkable providence returned him safe.

Thus did he graciously try and exercise this choice person so early, after her being enlightened with the cross, yea, and thus further, to gain her soul to himself, that her fervency in following the Lord was no less remarkable, than these tossings of her life were. But at last, a blessed period comes to all, having settled with her husband at Heidleberg, where they had some lucid and comfortable interval, she takes sickness, which in a few days brought her to the grave, but with greatest advantage of her inward case, as is set down at length by her husband, under his own hand, whom he saith, with greatest desire longed for her departure, and witnessed her comfort and joy herein, that now the time was come, when she assuredly knew she should for ever be delivered from the griefs and sorrows of this sad world, which she had so remarkably experienced, to enjoy that blessedness which is above. Nothing she could worse bear, than to hear of any presages of her recovery; and said to her friends, "The Lord hath been pleased to give her a short course, but full of tossings and trouble, and now could no more desire to return again, when so near the port." She was asked by some, if there was now any hesitation in her soul about her state, and what peace she had thereanent? To whom she answered thus: "For these seven years before, which was since the time of my being engaged to the Lord in embracing the truth; I had seldom any cessation from some assault or other of the devil to shake my faith, and weaken my hands about the truth: but now, as if he had lost all his darts, he appears no more this way; nor feel I in my soul any thing, but inexpressible tranquility and peace with God through Jesus Christ." Nor did she doubt the least to call herself one of the children of God.

And a little before her close, having awaked out of sleep, she seemed to her husband to look in an extraordinary manner, with a cheerful countenance, which made him ask the cause; to whom she said, "I have now got a sight in my rest

“ of a most excellent and pleasant place, shining with an “ inexpressible light and brightness.” But her weakness was such, as she could get no more at present spoken. Her husband, being much affected, told her, she had indeed cause of cheerfulness, since it was sure she should now within a little space dwell in that pleasant and desirable place, of which she had got such a sight. To whom with a most sweet and comfortable smile, she could only say, *Tota (inquit) sum leta, I am full of joy; but now I know you no more.* Thus did that sweet soul render up her spirit, who had through most of her sickness oft these words, *That her sole desire was to be dissolved, and to be with Christ;* and so far as her weakness could permit, did express to others her sense of the marvellous goodness of the Lord, in bringing her from her own country, his enlightening her with the knowledge of his truth, and that he had taken her heart off the world, and from all the pleasures and delights thereof, and wrought in her so ardent a desire after eternal life, about which she had then no fear. These were but a few, as her husband relates, of what in that time she expressed, to the comfort and wondering of all about her.

She died at Heidleberg, in the year 1555, in the twenty-ninth year of her age. This instance not only is at length set down by Melchior Adamus, having the account thereof from her own husband, as he had writ it after her death; but I find the same particularly mentioned by famous Voetius.

See 12. Having mentioned in the preceding section that rare example of piety, whom the Lord did thus marvellously rescue from the darkness of Antichristian popery under which she lived; it may not be unsuitable, and I hope for edification, to join such an observable instance therewith, of the conversion of a lady in our own country now several years ago from popery, who not only from her education, but with some serious and conscientious respect, before she was enlightened by the truth, did own the profession of that way.

The account set down is of her own words transcribed, which with much assurance I can here insert; yea, who after her conversion, until the Lord's calling her to himself, did confirm the truth thereof, by convincing and exemplary piety, to all that knew her. "I have changed no good thing I had before, but what I then in appearance had I labour to have it in truth now. I did ever believe the articles of the creed, and now believe to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, and no other way; that true faith must bring forth the fruits of repentance and good works, else that faith is but dead and counterfeit. This change upon me, neither I, nor any creature in the world made, but the Lord himself within me: for I strove against it all I could, till he let me know that it was himself dealing with me, and I now perceive had a work in me from the beginning, though I then knew it not. I had still a love to the truth, and earnest desire to know God, and studied according to my knowledge to do what might please him, and durst not follow, but made some conscience to shun what I judged wrong. This now I know was the beginning of the Lord's work with me: my love to his service, and that desire I had to be saved, which made me piece and piece to search out the grounds of that religion, I professed: And when other means failed, gave myself to reading of books, choosing rather to be under that challenge of curiosity, (for so it was accounted) than to be careless of my own salvation: Yea, it became my pleasure above all things on the-earth, to know what might further me to heaven; so as I could have been satisfied, (if the Lord had thought fit) to have renounced all the honour and pleasure of this world, for time and occasion to use those means which might help me to heaven: But when I got understanding of the grounds of that religion I professed, and my teachers accounted sufficient, I could find no true comfort there, nor how any could have it thereby either in life or death, since all my life I might not seek after assurance of being saved, for that was called the Protestants' presumption, and at my death nothing but Purgatory, a fire as hot as hell, and

as great tormants there, as they made me trow I must go to, but wist not how to get out again; yea, how to escape hell itself, since I behoved to come so near to it.

I wondered, and yet wonder, how any that looks for purgatory at their death, can either have true peace, or any comfort in the world; I am sure, they must either take it for a fiction, as it is, or else forget themselves when they are cheerful. Yet for all this, I continued in obedience of their injunctions, but would gladly have had a reason for what I did, and a warrant that God would be pleased therewith: But could find nothing but man's word for all; and was told by such, as gave themselves for teachers, That either I must be content to believe as the kirk believed, or else I would get no other satisfaction.

I thought upon this from time to time, and at last saw, that this was no sure ground to lean upon, except I would content myself with this; that the clergy knew, albeit I knew not; that they saw albeit I was blind; that they knew the gate to heaven, though I was not sure whether I was going to heaven, or purgatory: But this blind obedience might well please them, it could never give me content, except they could shew, that my obedience to the Pope and his clergy should be as acceptable to the Lord, as if it were to Christ and his apostles, and would not be quarrelled at the day of judgment.

These questions rising then in my mind, with the slight satisfaction I got, I must confess put me to many thoughts of heart; yet still I kept from protestant books, or conference with any such, especially the ministers, as long as I could: But when I saw no outgate, I was forced to lay aside all my beads and books, and to go to God himself for Christ's sake, to teach me how to do his will; but more and more doubts arose about fundry points of my religion, tho' I would never let the truth have place, so long as I could hold it out; (the Lord forgive me, for I did it ignorantly) Yet notwithstanding he was pleased to bear in light, and his truth upon me, as I was forced to acknowledge the same,

and leave these errors. I cannot tell all, nor the order of this, how they fell in my mind: But, first, I resolved to believe neither priest nor minister, except so far as I understood their warrant from the word of God; for I knew there was no sure ground to rest on; and if any thing pleased the Lord, it would be obedience to his own direction, and might well quarrel men's doctrine, but could never quarrel his own word. I resolved then to read the Rhemists New Testament, and the Protestant Old Testament; for I wist well the Lord would never be angry to read his own word, since I knew it pertained to my soul, as well as other folks: and I found it the sweetest and pleafantest book that ever I read in my life. I loved their cause the worse who held me so long from reading it, and a bad token of them that loved not the Scriptures; for if they loved them, they could not have spoken of them as they did, saying, They are not perfect, they are not clear nor plain, but obscure and ambiguous; yea, dangerous to be read, for breeding errors in such that read the same, which cannot but scare all that believe them from the Lord's word.

Sure, this is an injury to Christ and his apostles, to speak so of their writings, as they could not be content that men should speak so of theirs. Thus I perceived it to be false, their alledging the Pope and Roman kirk could not err, and how proud a word this was for any sinful flesh. Sure the apostle Peter was as good as any such, and yet erred and might have erred further, if God had not preserved him. And in reading the Rhemists New Testament, I found a warrant, that young children might read the Scriptures with profit, and that it serves to instruct and make men perfect in what concerns salvation.

I fell another day upon the first epistle of John, where I found no necessity was of our confession of sins to the priest, but of confession thereof to God, who is faithful to cleanse us from all sin, and that no advocate there is but Christ: And again, *If any say they have no sin, they lie, and the truth is not in them;* which I thought a fore word against them, who

say, they can not fulfil the law only, but do more than God commands, by works of supererogation.

As for that exception of mortal and venial sins, it could not satisfy, when Christ shews, *That they who say, Thou fool, are guilty of hell-fire.* Although some sins be greater than others, yet the least brings us under the curse, if God deal in the way of justice with us.

I fell out of conceit with their legends and life of their saints, when I considered some abominable lies I found in them; as that of St. Katharine of Sienna, whom they alledge laid her mouth to Christ's side, and drunk her sacrament; and that he interchanged hearts with her, and came down from heaven, and brought his mother, with St. Peter and St. Paul with him, and wedded her with a ring. I was made to dislike their form of prayers, and repeating over and over again the same words, until their beads be ended. I perceived all their devotion they taught, stood in words and ceremonies, which God cares not for. However, I disliked many things, and was assured they were wrong, yet I never renounced them till I found myself mistaken in the matter of the sacrament, and found, in reading the epistle to the Hebrews, there is no necessity to offer daily Hosties for the sins of the people.

For this Christ did once, in offering up himself, who continues for ever, and hath an everlasting priesthood, *whereby he is able to save for ever them that go unto God by him.* And again, that Christ was gone unto heaven, to appear before God: Not that he must offer up himself any more, for then must he have often suffered from the beginning of the world; but now once he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Thus I perceive, if the Scripture be true, no man can offer Christ but himself; nor can there be a priest after him now, *since he ever lives himself to make intercession for us;* nor can Christ be offered oftner than once, neither is any need of this, *since by one offering, he hath taken away the sins of his people;* yea, this is as impossible, as that he should suffer oftner than once.

Then I thought, if Christ be not offered in his bodily substance in the mass, there can be no transubstantiation in it. My teachers herein called me curious, but gave me no good answer. I wondered also at that place, 1 Cor. x. where it is said, *That in the wilderness they did eat the same spiritual meat, and drunk the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ.*

Since they made me believe, that Christ could not be in a spiritual way by faith eaten or drunk, as the Protestants teach, but his very flesh and blood taken in at the mouth substantially; I thought, how can the rock be called Christ, since it literally could not be in the sense of the Romish church, since he was not yet incarnate: If it be a figure, then the Protestants must have the better in the matter of the sacrament; since, as the rock is called Christ, so is the bread called his body. These doubts about the sacrament so affected me, as I could not but choose, and send for a minister, (let any judge, if it was not then time) with whom I reasoned thereanent. He answered my doubts, and directed me to prayer herein, shewing, I could not get solid rest, till the Lord made his word lively on my soul; which I found after made good, the Lord making the Scripture efficacious, lively and clear in the points I doubted of; and gave both such assurance of his love, and of the true religion, that all the earth could not have bred me such joy and solid peace, beyond any thing I can utter.

I have now got the assurance in some measure, which I was seeking. I have found the true ground to rest upon, and God's own truth made lively. I am now free from the fear of Purgatory; I scorn that fiction now with joy, and am assured the Lord is righteous, who will not exact twice payment of one debt, Christ's passion, and his people's torment in a fire as hot as hell. The Lord, who hath promised a sufficient cautioner for us, that we might escape torment, cannot come short herein. The Lord help such who live in fear of this wicked fiction. If the Pope and his clergy, for the love they have to money, keep the world in such fearful blindness,

they have their judge to answer unto. I praise the Lord, who has delivered me out of these errors; I renounce them; and have found too great mercy in the knowledge of the truth to make me exchange again. O that all knew the difference as well as I have felt!"

Besides these choice and weighty instances before mentioned, I must here further add a few memorable passages of the death of some grave and eminent ministers of Christ in our country, worthy to be recorded, as a seal not only of their ministry, and acceptance therein with their master, but to the truth of godliness, and doctrine of the Protestant church, which have hitherto been little known, nor were mentioned amongst the instances of some great and extraordinary ministers of Christ in the church of Scotland formerly published; the truth whereof I had from one of the gravest ministers of our church, both for judgment and piety in that time, yea, under his own hand, who was himself present at the death of all here mentioned, excepting this first instance, which was many years before.

SECT. 13. It may be an astonishing passage about the death of that worthy man of God, Mr. David Black, set down by his old intimate friend, Mr. Andrew Melvil, with whom for a time he was colleague in St. Andrews, until for the truth, and his adherence thereto, he was after forced by a confinement to a more retired place beyond Tay in Angus, where his ministry was until his death: Which passage he assuredly knowing, the truth thereof he relates thus; "That after near communion with God, and extraordinary assistance in public a few days before his death, where he seemed not only to surpass all others, but himself also at that time, with such a discernible gale of the spirit, both to humble the hearts of his hearers, and after, to such a melting of their spirits, as they burst forth in rivers of tears, and thus to an engaging them to take on the sweet and easy yoke of Christ: He found then also upon his own soul such a sensible taste of heaven, and being admitted to feel, as it were, the air of that country, with some unusual enjoyment of the hid pleasures

and delights which are there; he was seized with a fervent longing to put off his earthly tabernacle, that he might get admission from the Lord, from his prison here, to that inconceivably blessed state and fellowship of the society above; to which, by a marvellous condescendence, the Lord did so far indulge his servant, after many fore conflicts and wrestlings he had in his life, to give such a secret hint and intimation of this to himself, as he could not conceal it, not only from his family, but from his flock, taking a most solemn farewell of them all, with a discourse, as Mr Melvil shews, that seemed to be spoke out of heaven, concerning the miseries and griefs here, with that inconceivable glory which is above, and his assurance to be there.

The night following, after a short supper, and having read and prayed in his family with some unusual countenance, strong and heavy groans, and deep wrestlings, he went a little to bed. And the next day having then called his people to the celebration of the sacrament, went to church, where, after sermon, and the celebration of the communion, he had scarce ended, when he finds the approaches of death seize upon him, with such a present change, as his friends essayed to hold him up on every hand; but pressing to be at his knees, with his hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, in the very act of adoration, as in a transport, is taken away without pain or trouble." Thus, as the Relater foresaid shews, that holy and excellent man did breathe forth his precious soul in so extraordinary a way, that as he says, it seemed rather like a translation, than a death, and without any known sickness.

This account by that famous servant of Christ, Mr. Andrew Melvil, was many years since published, with this title, *Mira & vera relatio de Davidis Blackii transmigratione in coelestem patriam.*

SECT. 14. Mr. Robert Scot, a truly godly and able minister of Christ at Glasgow, died January 18, 1629. On his death-bed, he did witness his soul's abhorrence at the wicked and corrupt courses of the time: "And my comfort is,

saith he, that God with-held me from them. If I were to live, I should not be so sparing as I have been to witness against these." And a little before his death, he lay sometime as in a kind of trance, and after his awaking out of it, took off his night-cap, and threw it to the bed-foot, and cried out, "I have now seen the Lord, and heard him say, Make way for my faithful servant Mr. Robert Scot," bidding his friends farewell; and then after died.

Seet. 15. Mr. Robert Cunningham, minister at Holywood in the north of Ireland, about whom this account I had from the same worthy Relater, and others his intimate acquaintance there, that he was the one man, to his discerning, of all that ever he knew, who resembled most the meekness of Jesus Christ in his whole carriage, and was so convincing in his way to the most gross, and revered by all, that he was oft troubled with that Scripture, *Woe to you, when all men speak well of you*; so as it was told some of his adversaries in that place, that it was sure, if ever they meddled with Mr. Cunningham, their cup would be full. He was sometimes in public preaching, to his own sense, not so assisted as usually: but even then, to the discerning Christians of these times, was as edifying and refreshful as at any time else, but ordinarily was borne through with a full gale. I was with him (saith he) at his death in Irvine, in the year 1637; at which time, besides many other weighty expressions, he said one time, "I see Christ standing over death's head, and saying, Deal warily with my servant, loose now this one pin, and here another, for this tabernacle must be set up again." A little before his death, his wife sitting on the bed-side, where he lay, and her hand in his, he did by prayer recommend to God the whole church, the word of the gospel in Ireland, his own parish, and his children, and in end said, "And lastly, O Lord, I recommend to thee this gentlewoman, who is no more my wife;" and with that saying, he softly loosed his hand from hers, and gently thrust it a little from him; at which both she and some others present burst out in weeping, and within a little after he rendered up his spirit.

Sect. 16. Mr. *Jofias Welch*, minifter at Temple Patrick in Ireland, as the former worthy Relater fhews, died *June 23, 1634*, with whom he was then prefent. He had many gracious and edifying expreffions, though alfo fome wriftlings, as in much of his life he had been thus kept under deep inward exercifes. A little before his clofe, he faid with a fad groan, Oh for hypocrify; upon which one fpeaks to the company of Chriftians then prefent, "See how Satan faftens on the heel of this fervant of Chrift, even when he is going in over the threshold of heaven." A little after, whilft he was at prayer at his bed-fide, that word Victory coming out of his mouth, he prefently took hold of his hand, and defired him to ceafe a little, and clapping both his hands together, cried out, victory, victory, victory for ever more; and then defired him to go on in prayer, and in a fhort time after died.

This was the more obfervable, in fo fweet and triumphant a clofe, that through moft of the time of his miniftry, he had fuch frequent and fharpe conflicts in his own private cafe, fo as once, after he had been through the exercife of his fpirit brought fo low, as put his friends to fome aftonifhment thereanent, he was enforced to defire a meeting of thefe great and eminent minifters of Chrift who then lived in that country near him, fhewing his preffure was fuch, as he could not longer conceal what was on his fpirit thereanent. And after meeting together with prayer, whilft his countenance fpake the weight of his inward exercife, and with tears running over his face, he told them the caufe of that meeting, that he had been now for a long time preffed to defer the miniftry, having preached for fo many years the gofpel of Chrift to others, and yet himfelf but a caft-away. Thus did the Lord gracoufly deal with his fervant, fo as the truth of his own grace was hid from himfelf, whilft it fhined in the greateft luftre to the conviction of others; but this advantage alfo followed thereon, that his miniftry then was made moft remarkably fruitful, not in the place he lived in only, but in the

whole country, and thus fitted by his own exercise and wrestlings to deal with the consciences of others.

Seet. 17. Mr. *John Scrymgeor*, minister at Kinghorn, a man not so polished, but rude-like in his deport and manner, but of a deep reach of natural wit, very learned and knowing in the Hebrew language, and of eminent piety. He told this passage to some of his intimate friends, 'That having divers children taken away by death, and one young daughter at that time, whom he loved most dearly, under that disease of the cruels, which is called the king's evil, with several running sores then upon her, so as she was at the point of death:

He was one night called up to see her die, and finding her in that case, went out to the fields, as he told, in the night-season, being in great grief and anxiety, so as he adventured, when alone, on such expostulating with the Lord, and with such expressions, so as for all the world he durst not again utter. And being thus pressed, said, "Thou knowest, O Lord, I hitherto have served thee in the uprightness of my heart according to my power, nor have stood in awe to declare thy mind before the greatest whosoever in the time; and thou seest I take pleasure in this child, and cannot obtain such a thing at thy hand as her sparing; for I was (saith he) then in great agony of spirit;" but at last it was said to him from the Lord, "I have heard thee at this time, but use not this boldness with me in time coming for such particulars." And when he came home, the child was sitting up in her bed taking meat, and fully whole; and when he looked to these sores that had been running upon her, they were quite healed.

A little before his death, that foresaid worthy minister of Christ the Relater went to see him, where he was under such fore pain of the stone, as he was sometimes enforced to cry out. He said to him, My nature hath been rude and stunkard all my days; and now, by this pain, the Lord is even daunting me, to make me as a lamb, before he takes me to himself.

Sec7. 18. This instance I judged worthy to be insert, having such assurance of the truth thereof, namely of Mr. John M'Birney, minister in Aberdeen, a godly, zealous and painful preacher. He used always when he rode to have two Bibles with him, the one in the Original, the other in English; and being alone, was then exercised, either in reading, meditating or praying; and if any were in company with him, he would read or speak from the Scripture to them. When he died, he called his wife, and told her, he had no outward means to leave, either to her or to his only daughter, who had survived him, but had got assurance from the Lord, that he should provide for them both; and accordingly the day he was buried, the magistrates of the town came to the house after the burial, and brought two subscribed papers, one of a competent maintenance to his wife during her life, another of a provision for his daughter.

CHAP. VI.

Sec7. 1. THAT the Lord's way and appearances for the church of Scotland, since the late blessed reformation from Popery, both in the rise and advance thereof, had been truly extraordinary and marvellous, may be demonstrable on these grounds; 1. That this great reformation was at such a remarkable period, as at no time it could in an ordinary way have seemed more hopeless: These being considered, (1.) How little of any human or visible encouragements concurred thereto, to darken that brightness of the Lord's own appearance in this marvellous advance and spreading of his kingdom through that land. 2. That by the queen's marriage with the French king, the adversaries of the truth had the strength of this kingdom, besides those that were amongst themselves, to concur in opposition to the work of God there. 3. We see the queen Dowager then at the helm of government, and her greatest aim with the furthest both of subtilty and force, to crush and bear down any stirrings of the work of the Lord at that time. 4. That bloody and cruel man Car-

dinal Beaton, who with greatest vigour and authority did act beyond any of his predecessors, to bear down any rising of the gospel at that time.

Seet. 2. It was undeniable, how the first instruments, whom the Lord called forth about his work in that land, were then extraordinarily called, and had a most convincing seal thereto. I shall only set down the first three; who, with such an extraordinary appearance of the Lord, were sent forth upon his work in that land. 1. Mr. Patrick Hamilton a young gentleman, of great birth, of excellent parts and learning, fervent in the truth, who was quickly taken away, whom the zeal of God did so eat up, that after his travelling abroad, and familiar converse with such men as Luther and Melancthon, those bright beams of light then planted in his heart, did enforce a public vent of the same. But the Popish clergy, under the dread of their own hazard did with all possible vigour bestir themselves to have him taken away, and to labour with the king, then young, to go in pilgrimage to St. Dothies in Ross, that thus no intercession in his absence might be made for him; but it may be no less seen, how this heat for having him taken out of the way, did most observably help to bring down the house over them, and a greater ruin to their interest by his death than his life. At the place of his execution, he exhorted to bear in mind the example of his death, which, though bitter to the flesh, (yet said) it is the entrance into eternal life, which none shall possess, who deny Jesus Christ before this wicked generation. And whilst one Campbell a friar did most trouble him in the very time of his sufferings, he said, "Wicked man, thou knowest the contrary, and hast confessed the same to me, I appeal thee before the tribunal-seat of Christ." After which, within a few days, the said friar died in much terror of conscience, and as one desperate. This was *Anno Christi* 1527.

Seet. 3. As a further witness to this, I must instance that great servant of Christ, Mr. *George Wishart*, who, a little after, was sent forth to publish the gospel there, whose life being at large inserted in that history of the reformation of

the church of Scotland, was, the reason I forbore to mention him amongst these great instruments of our church, I have elsewhere recorded; but since many can have little access for perusal of this, yea, that without the least hesitation, from all the records of the church since the first times of the Apostles, a more extraordinary ambassador of Jesus Christ cannot be instanced. I shall give this short account of him, from Mr. Knox himself, who then was much with him; yea, not only from the printed history of the church, that was by him penned; but by a manuscript from his own mouth, bearing the same account, which I have beside me.

This great man, after this, being for a considerable time abroad, being one of admirable grace, and singularly learned, both in divine and human sciences, did at last return to his own country, where he first preached in Montrose and then in Dundee, to the admiration of all that heard him, until that one Robert Miln, in that town, at the instigation of the Cardinal (though he being a principal man there, had sometime been a professor of religion) did, in the time of public sermon, inhibit his troubling their town any more by preaching, since he would not suffer it. Whereupon this blessed man, musing a little with his eyes bent unto heaven, said, "God is my witness, that I never minded your trouble, but your comfort; yea, it is more sad to me than yourselves: But I am sure, that to refuse and chase from you his messengers, shall not preserve you from trouble, but bring you into it, and God shall send you ministers, that shall neither fear burning nor banishment. I have offered you the word of salvation with the hazard of my life, but now ye refuse me, and I must leave my innocency to be declared by my God. If it be long prosperous with you, I am not led by the spirit of truth, but, if unlooked-for trouble come, acknowledge the cause, and turn to God, who is gracious and merciful." Some noblemen then present persuaded him to stay, which by no means he would, but went to the west country, with an offer of the gospel, where he was gladly received by many, though the bishop of Glasgow, with his

trains came to the town of Air to resist him, and secured the public church for himself to preach in, which, whilst some opposed, Mr. Wishart^s said, "Let him alone, let us go to the market-crofs;" and so they did, where he made so notable a sermon, as his very enemies themselves were confounded. After he came to Mauchlin, where he was by force kept out of the church, to some, who would have broke in, he said, "Jesus Christ is as mighty in the fields, as in the church; yea, he often preached in the desert, at the sea-side, and in other places. It is the word of peace God sends by me, the blood of none shall this day be shed for it;" and so going to the fields, he stood on a bank, where he continued preaching three hours; and God wrought so wonderfully thereby, as one of the wickedest men in all the country, the laird of Shield, was converted, and his eyes ran down with such aundance of tears, as all men wondered. It was then the news was brought to Mr. Wishart, that the plague was broke out in Dundee, within four days after he was prohibited to preach there, yea, with such a rage, as it is almost beyond credit, how many died. This being related to him, notwithstanding the importunity of his friends, he would go thither, saying, "They are now in trouble, and need comfort, perhaps this hand of God will make them reverence his word, which before they lightly esteemed." Coming to Dundee, the joy of the faithful was exceedingly great; and because most of the inhabitants were either sick, or employed about them, he choosed the east-gate to preach upon, where the whole were within, and the sick without the gate. His text Psal. cvii. *He sent his word and healed them, &c.* where he so comfortably held forth the gain and comfort of God's word, what punishment comes by contempt of it; and freedom of his grace to such as truly turn to him, with the happiness of his people whom he takes from this misery, as the hearts of his hearers were so raised not to regard death, but to judge them the more happy who should then depart; not knowing whether they might have such a comforter again with them.

After this, the plague almost quite ceased, and when he took his leave of them, said, "That God had almost put an end to that plague, and he was now called to another place," and thence he went to Montrose to salute the church, where he sometimes preached, but spent most of his time in private meditation; in which he was so earnest, as night and day he continued in it. It was at that time the Cardinal conspired his death, by a counterfeit letter of a friend of Mr. Wishart's the laird of Kinneere, that with all possible speed he would come to him; since he was taken with a sudden sickness. In the mean time, did sixty armed men lie in wait within a mile and a half of the town of Montrose to murder him in the way. The letter coming to his hands by a boy, who also brought him an horse to ride on, he set forward with some honest men there, who were his friends; but suddenly stooping, and musing a space in the way, he returned, which they wondering at, asked the cause, to whom he said, "I will not go, I am forbidden of God, and assuredly there is treachery: Let some of you go to yonder place, and tell me what ye find;" which they doing, found to be truth; and on their return told Mr. Wishart of it; whereon he said, "I know I shall end my life by that blood-thirsty man, but it will not be on this manner." The time approaching for his meeting the gentleman at Edinburgh, he took his leave and departed, and by the way, as he lodged with a faithful brother, James Watson of Innergowry, he got up in the night, and went into a yard, upon which two friends hearing, did secretly follow; there he walking in an alley for some space, breathing forth many sobs and deep groans, then fell on his knees, and his groans increased, and then upon his face. Those that watched him found him thus weeping and praying an hour, after which, upon his in-coming, they adventured to ask him where he had been, saying be plain with us, for we have heard your mourning, and saw your gestures; to whom with a sad countenance he said, "I had rather ye had been in your beds; but I will tell you, I am assured my warfare is near an end, and therefore pray with me, that I shrink not

now when the battle is most hot;" upon which with weeping they said, "This is small comfort to us." To whom he answered, "God shall send you comfort after: This realm shall be enlightened with the light of Christ's gospel, as clearly as any day since the days of the apostles; yea, the house of God shall be built there, and shall not want in despite of enemies, the very cap-stone put upon it; nor will it be long before this shall be, and many shall not suffer after me till the glory of God shall appear and triumph in despite of Satan. But alas! if the people afterwards prove unthankful, then fearful shall the plagues be that will follow."

Then went he upon his journey to Leith, but hearing nothing of those gentlemen that were to meet him, he kept himself retired, and grew pensive, and being asked the reason, said, "What differ I from a dead man? hitherto God hath used my labours for instruction, and to the disclosing of darkness, and now I look as one that dare not shew his face; hereupon his friends finding his desire to preach, said, "It is most comfortable for us to hear you, but for the danger you are in, we dare not desire it." To whom he said, "Let God provide for me, as it pleaseth him, if you dare hear;" and so preached on the parable of the sower, Mat. xiii. And a little after preached at Inveresk, near Musselburgh, where was a great confluence of people, and whilst two Gray-friars then at the church-door, whispered to such as came in, Mr. Withart observing, said to the people, "I pray you make room for these men, it may be they come to learn;" and to them he said, "Come near, for I assure you, ye shall hear the word of truth, which this day shall seal up either your salvation or damnation." But whilst they still continued to disturb the people, he turned to them the second time with an angry countenance, and said, "O ministers of Satan, will ye neither hear the truth, nor suffer others to hear it; depart and take this for your portion, God shall shortly confound and disclose your hypocrisy within this kingdom, you shall be abominable to men, and your places and habitations desolate." This he spake with much vehemency, and turning to

the people said, "These men have provoked the Spirit of God unto anger, and then proceeded in his sermon."

After he preached in divers places else, the people much flocking after him, and in all his sermons foretold the shortness of time he had to travel, and near approach of his death. Coming to Haddington, his auditory began much to decrease by the earl of Bothwell, whose power was great there, and upon the instigation of the Cardinals, had prohibited such both of the country and town from hearing.

As he was going to church, he received a letter from the west-country gentlemen, and having read it, said to John Knox, (who then diligently waited upon him) "I am weary of the world; because he saw men to be weary of God; for the gentlemen of the west have sent me word, that they can not keep the meeting at Edinburgh." Mr. Knox wondered he should speak this so immediately before sermon, contrary to his way, said, Sir, sermon now approaches, I will now leave you to your meditation. Then Mr. Wishart walked up and down about half an hour, his sad countenance shewing the grief of his mind, and after went to the pulpit, where his auditory being small, he began in this manner, "O Lord; how long shall it be, that thy holy word shall be despised, and men not regard their own salvation; I have heard of thee, O Haddington, that two or three thousand persons would be at a vain and wicked play, and now to hear the messenger of the eternal God, can scarce one hundred be numbered. Sore and fearful shall the plagues be, which will ensue on such a contempt, with fire and sword shalt thou be plagued; yea, thee Haddington, in special, strangers shall possess, and the present inhabitants shall either in bondage serve their enemies, or shall be chased from their own habitations, and that because ye have not known, nor will know the time of your visitation." This prophecy was accomplished not long after, as Mr. Knox shews, and was then known to all; whilst the English made it a garrison, and after having burnt and spoiled a great part of it, the French that came as auxiliaries did help forward that stroke; so as this town did

never recover her former beauty, nor men of such wisdom and parts as did formerly inhabit it.

That night was Mr. Withart apprehended in the house of Ormiston by the earl of Bothwel, suborned thereto by the Cardinal; the manner was thus:

After sermon, he took his last farewell of his friends in Haddington; John Knox would have fain gone with him, but he said, "Return to your children, and God bless you, sufficient is one for one sacrifice." And then went to the house of Ormiston with the laird, and others who accompanied him; and after supper had a comfortable discourse of the love of God towards his children, upon which, after singing Psal. li. he retired to his chamber, praying, that the Lord, if it were his good will, would give comfortable rest to them that night; but at midnight the house was beset, and the earl of Bothwel shewed the laird of the house, it was in vain to resist, since the Governor and Cardinal were within a mile thence at Elphinstoun, with a great power, but gave furthest assurances, that if they would open the gates, Mr. Withart should be safe; to whom the laird of Ormiston, with some Barons then present, said unto Bothwel (such was their love and fervency for the truth) "My Lord, if you keep promise, we will give you a band of manrent, and not only ourselves will serve you, but will procure all the professors in Lothian to do the same." But this was quickly broke upon Bothwel's account. And after, was that holy and excellent man taken to St. Andrews, where the Cardinal with others of the clergy, did with greatest vigour pursue him to death, at which time, turning to the people, when he was brought to the fire, he said, "I beseech you, be not offended at the word of God, for the torments which you see prepared for me, but I exhort you to love the word and suffer patiently, and with a comfortable heart for the word's sake, which is your undoubted salvation, and everlasting comfort. I pray you also shew my brethren, that they cease not to learn the word of God which I taught, according to the measure of the grace given, for no persecution nor trouble in this world, and that

this doctrine was no old wives' fables, but the truth of God: For if I had taught men's doctrine, I should have had greater thanks from men; but for the word's sake I now suffer, not sorrowfully, but with a glad heart; for this I was sent into the world, that for Christ's sake I should suffer this fire. Behold my face, you shall not see me change my countenance. I fear not the fire, and if persecution arise for the word's sake, fear not them that can kill the body, and have not power to hurt the soul."

And when the fire was kindled, said, "This torments my body, but no whit abates my spirit." Then looking towards the Cardinal, he said, "He who in such state from that high place feeds his eyes with my torments, within a few days shall be hanged out of the same window, to be seen with as much ignominy, as he now leans there with pride." Which prediction was a few days after most remarkably fulfilled.

SECT. 4. Seeing, there is a public account of Mr Knox, that deservedly famous instrument for the work of reformation in the church Scotland, I forbear to give any repetition here: But this further, which is not inserted in the account given of his life, and which with some assurance I can set down here. I thought worthy to relate, how before his death, when he was enforced to go over to St. Andrews from Edinburgh, because of the queen's faction, which was so strong in the town, and the castle kept out upon her interest; yea, was so weak, as to be helped to the church, leaning upon his servant Richard Balentine; he told the people, that the castle should vomit up the captain thereof, who was the laird of Grange, and that he should not come forth of the gate, but over the walls, and that tower of the castle, which was called David's tower, should run like a sand glass; upon which, one Mr. Robert Hamilton minister there, used some freedom to ask what warrant he had for this; he answered, "Thou shalt see this with thine eyes, and know it to be truth;" as it came to pass, he being then in Edinburgh, when the fore-work of the castle was demolished by the English cannon, and run down like a sandy brae, he saw the captain

come over the walls with a staff in his hand, because the gate was then stopped with the rubbish, and how, in this very circumstance, the word of that man of God was accomplished. It was a little before this he sent by Mr. David Lindsay a grave minister to the laird of Grange, that message which is published in his life; to whom he said, "You know I have loved this gentleman well, but shew him from me, that if he do not give over his hostile opposition, he shall be brought over the walls with shame, and be hung up with his face to the sun," as after exactly fell out; and said further, "On this, God hath assured me."

Upon which delivery of that message by Mr. David Lindsay, and a return of his answer, both from the captain and secretary Lethington, who was then there, he said, "I am sorry that this should befall him, yet God assureth me there is mercy for his soul; for the other, I have no warrant that it shall be well with him, which words, after Grange desired Mr. David Lindsay to tell him over again before his death, (being truly penitent) and was much comforted therewith, and said, "I hope to give some evidence of the Lord's making good the words of that man of God, at my death," as fell out most discernibly both by his words and carriage at that time.

A little before Mr. Knox's own death, he said, "I have been fighting with spiritual wickedness, and have prevailed, I have been in heaven and tasted of the heavenly joys, and if it were the good will of the Lord, he hath so far subjected my spirit to his will, as to be content, though for many years, to lie under this pain and trouble, which now is upon me."

Seet. 5. Some signal and astonishing providences for making way to the work of reformation, there might be seen then, as a convincing witness thereto, 1. That surprising death of Henry the second of France; and within a little, of Francis his son, to whom the crown then by marriage with the young queen was so far made over, as was like to bring both the civil and religious interest of the nation under the French yoke, and to have most enforcing snares therewith,

for engaging such as were of greatest power then, to a compliance with their way, on whom they saw their hope of preferment, with other outward advantages did so visibly depend. 2. That stupendous and stately act of the judgment of the Lord, in the death of Cardinal Beaton, who was so great an adversary to the truth, and in whose hand the whole power civil and ecclesiastic seemed to be engrossed, where all may see an extraordinary providence, and the immediate finger of God, except they will shut their eyes.

1. In the strange excitement of instruments to adventure thereon, against all human reason, or any appearance, how they could withstand the power of the popish party, both at home and abroad.

2. How some of those were enforced to declare their having no interest or motive else, but avenge the blood of that excellent man Mr. Wishart, and of his being a sworn adversary to Jesus Christ and his truth, for which they were sent of the Lord.

3. So strange a concurrence of things to make this effectual, that in one morning, not above eighteen seized on that strong castle in St. Andrews, where he lived, and put near an hundred servants and workmen out of the gates, without tumult or blood.

4. How this was in a very few days after the sufferings of that man of God, yea, so manifest an accomplishment of his prediction before the world, that out of the place where the Cardinal was looking forth, with greatest joy to feed his eyes upon the sufferings of that blessed witness for Christ, he should be hung over as a spectacle of the holy judgment of God, whilst nothing then, in an ordinary way, could have seemed more improbable.

5. The remarkable preservation and return of of all those, after they were sent prisoners to France, as Mr. Knox, who was then there, did with greatest assurance from the Lord promise.

Sec. 6. It is astonishing, and should be matter of wonder and praise for after-ages, to consider that solemn time of the

Reformation, when the Lord began to visit his church there, what a swift course the spreading of the kingdom of Christ had; and how professors of the truth thronged in, amidst the greatest threatenings of those on whose side authority and power then was: O how astonishing and extraordinary was this appearance of the Lord there, on all ranks, to offer themselves willingly for the truth, and upon such of his servants, as were sent forth in the work of the ministry, with such zeal and oneness of spirit, as on the furthest hazard of their lives and estates, they did enter into covenant for mutual defence, for the truth of Christ, and a free profession thereof; as is set down at large in the history of the reformation, first in the year 1557, and after at Perth in the year 1559, by the congregation of the west country, Perth, Dundee, Fife, Angus, and Mearns, to concur, assist, and convene together, and not spare labour, goods, substance, bodies and lives (for these are the words thereof) "to maintain the liberty of the congregation, and every member thereof, against whomsoever that should trouble them for the cause of religion." Thus, with no less evidence was this promise then accomplished in that age, as ever, *Isa. xl. 31. That they who wait on the Lord, should mount up as with eagles wings, and should run and not be weary, &c.* as Mr. Knox then shewed; "For what was our force, (saith he) or number, to bring so great an enterprise to such a close; our very enemies can witness, yet in how great purity did God establish his true religion amongst us; and this we confess to be a strength given us from God, because we esteemed not ourselves wise in our own eyes; but knowing our wisdom to be foolishness before God, laid it aside, and followed that which was only approved of him. In this point could never our enemies cause us faint, whilst for this we wrestled, that the reverend face of the first primitive and apostolic church, should be reduced to the eyes and knowledge of men, and in that point hath our God strengthened us, till the work was finished, as the world may see." To this purpose doth Mr. Knox speak; *History of Reformation*, page 303, 304.

Sect. 7. To witness the immediate finger of the Lord here, and that his people's strength then was in his presence going before them. It was remarkable, that sudden surprising darkness, and almost universal faintness, upon the spirits of all then engaged for the truth, a very little before this great deliverance, and settled calm in the church's establishment. For, at that time, whilst the French kept Leith, and the Protestant party seemed most unite, with a greater concurrence of the nobility and gentry than had been formerly; such an amazing fear and terror, did then seize on most, as they withdrew without any discernible cause, that all might see the Lord's blessed concurrence, and such an high spring-tide of his people's zeal and resolution for the truth, to have no necessary connection with human assistance, and furthest encouragements from that airth. At which time Mr. Knox preached at Stirling, whither most in that confusion and panic fear, were retired, had these words, as are at length set down in the Church History.

"This day are our faces confounded, our enemies triumph, our hearts have quaked for fear, when we were very few in number in comparison of our enemies, and had neither duke nor lord, (for at this time duke Hamilton was joined with the lords of the congregation) except a very few; we called on God, and took him for our protector; and amongst us was heard no boasting of multitude, strength or policy, but only did sob up to God the equity of our cause; But now, since our number is multiplied, especially the duke with his friends have joined with us, nothing was heard, but such a lord will bring so many hundred spears, and this man hath credit to persuade the country. And thus we who felt God's potent hand for our defence, have of late made flesh our arm."

And a little after, saith, "It resteth, that we return to God, the eternal God, who bears down to the death, that he may raise up again; and to leave a remembrance of his wondrous deliverance, to the praise of his own name; which, if we do unfeignedly, I no more doubt, that this confusion

and fear shall be turned into joy, honour and boldness, than I doubt that God gave victory to the Israelites, after they had been twice repulsed. Yea, whatever become of us, I doubt not but this cause in despite of Satan shall yet triumph in this realm; for, as it is the eternal truth of God, so shall it once prevail, though for this time it be impugned. Yea, it may be, God shall plague some, because they delight not in the truth, but for worldly respects favour it, and take away some of his dearest children; but neither shall the one or other hinder this work, but in end it shall triumph." History of the Reformation, page 209, 210. The verification of which did in a short time most remarkably follow.

Seet. 8. Such was the Lord's marvellous appearance then in the behalf of his church, after so long a night of Antichristian darkness; as a few years, yea months, did bring forth that, which would have seemed improbable for an age to accomplish; that we find betwixt the suffering of the last martyr for the truth then, Walter Miln, who was burnt at St. Andrews, April 1558, and the establishment of the Protestant religion and civil sanction to the Confession of Faith, by the three estates of the nation, with a full abolishment of Popery, which followed that treaty and transaction at Leith with the French in July 1560, was but little above two years; to shew what great things the Lord can do, above that his people could either think or ask; and how sometimes one year may bring forward that, which could not have been expected in many.

Seet. 9. Though it was not long before a sharp and searching trial was upon the queen's arrival from France, and these essays put on foot by subtilty, to accomplish what open force could not do; some memorable providences therewith are also worthy to be noted. 1. That remarkable preface at her very first arrival of what after followed, when so extraordinary appearance the face of the heavens had, that, besides the surface so moist, and corruption of the air, such a mist then was, with a thick darkness, as scarce any could espy another for a little way, that day of her arrival, and two days after; nor

did the sun once shine all that time to the discerning of any, so as it is set down in the history of the church: A more dolorous and astonishing face of the heavens hath not been since the memory of man, and in such a time of the year.

2. The Lord's breaking of the most visible essays, which then was against the Protestant interest, as in that memorable deliverance at that battle in the north against the earl of Huntly, where the strength of the Popish party was much joined, and a few on the Protestant side, but with such a marvellous assistance, as they broke that army, even whilst by a correspondence a considerable number of those that were joined with them, fell in with the enemy in the very heat of the fight. At which time of so remarkable a strait, secretary Lethington, being then present with the earl of Murray, made a public reference to the Lord by prayer in the heat of the conflict, to decide in the justness of their cause betwixt them and the adversary, and a most surprising victory quickly followed. The earl of Huntly was killed, who was, next to the queen, the most leading person to promote the Popish interest, and carried dead upon an horse to church in Aberdeen, where the lady Pitligo, a grave and godly woman, amongst others who came to see him, burst out in amazement in these words, "What stability is there in human affairs! For this is his body here lying upon the ground in so poor and despicable a manner, who this very morning was by all judged the richest, wisest, and most powerful of any in the nation." 3. That memorable deliverance the church had a few years after, against the queen's party at the battle of Langsyde, by that truly good regent the earl of Murray, where the Lord's immediate decision might be discernible to all, whilst the very Protestant interest there seemed to be at the stake, and in such visible hazard. 4. It was writ in greatest letters, for after-ages to notice, that stupendous judgment in the tragic close of this queen, who wanted not notable accomplishments of nature, but had still contended how to weaken the Protestant interest, yea, to divide and break them amongst themselves, after her return from France.

Seet. 10. It is true, the sufferings of the church of Scotland, resisting to blood for the truth, were not in such measure then, as in other churches, though these few, who were thus called to seal the truth and testimony of Christ, were most remarkably owned with his countenance. But these also would be considered.

1. How then the Lord did in an extraordinary way call his people to an active testimony, and with such an immediate power on the spirits of all ranks, as put them in so short a time in a capacity for appearing against the cruel tyranny of their adversaries, that to this present time it may be as a continued wonder before us.

2. We may see in what another manner the Lord hath exercised his church there, more than any other churches, with such fore continued conflicts upon the government of his house, and purity of worship, that it may be truly said, it hath been the lot of the church of Scotland to have a more continued wrestling part with remarkably searching trials, than any of the churches abroad; and it may be said, that the part and service of this church, peculiarly allotted her since the reformation, hath been to contend for the crown and prerogative royal of Jesus Christ as the supreme head and king over his church; and on this great interest have the trials of his people been most remarkably stated.

Seet. 11. Whilst, after the sweet and comfortable calm the church had from that former bondage of Popery, there wanted not new assaults from such, who sought to invade the liberties of the kingdom of Christ there, and in a more subtle manner, with closer approaches followed the same; it was seen, and may be instructing to this day, what visible marks of judgment did the holy God put in the very entry of this trial on such, as did first adventure to bear down the liberties of the church there; as,

1. The earl of Morton, one otherwise of most excellent endowments, who had been zealous against Popery, but observably swayed with that sad predominant of covetousness, which (whilst he was regent) to have some legal claim to the

bishops' revenues, put him to essay some new mould for their establishment, with some abridgment of their power; that thus by compact he and others of the nobility then might have a considerable share of the church-rents; but as both the end and means he followed for attaining thereto were sinful, and this was the first assault to the government of the reformation; we may see a remarkable beacon for after-times in the holy judgment of the Lord set up thereon, in his being thrown down, arraigned upon treason, beheaded, and his estate brought under forfeiture, though not without some convincing evidences at his death of serious repentance; and then did he call to remembrance Mr. Knox's last words to him whilst he was on his death-bed, "How the Lord had given him, both wisdom, riches and honour, and then was calling him to the government of the nation, (for at this time he was chosen regent) and that he would be careful to improve these for the Lord, and good of his church; but, if otherwise, assured him of a sad fall, and that his end should be shame and ignominy."

2. It was upon his fall, that violent man, the earl of Arran, then got up to the public government of the nation, whose great aim was, but with more rage and fury than had been formerly essayed, to break the government of the church, and bring it in subordination to the civil magistrate; but in a few years did the righteous God so conspicuously break him, as he was enforced to flee from the court, and retire in disgrace, is put out of all public trust, and at last upon the high-way by a strange surprise of providence was assaulted, and killed dead upon the place by my lord Torthorrel, a friend of the late earl of Morton, and in revenge of his death. And for these wretched churchmen, who then vigorously concurred in such an attempt, such as Mr. John Douglas, Mr. Patrick Adamson, with some others also that followed after, a signal remark of the holy judgment of the Lord, was then made as notour before the world, as their defection from the truth had been; but, having given some account thereof elsewhere, I forbear now to touch it further.

Scet. 12. We may see in those times after the reformation, how their wanted not still some great and extraordinary instruments sent forth for the service of the church, of whom I have formerly given some account, as it might be clear to us of something from the Lord of an extraordinary and apostolic spirit with them; but, since it is congruous to the present subject, and that I hope it may be for edification to the reader, I shall yet add but some few passages more about two of those instances, whom I have elsewhere touched; these great servants of Jesus Christ in their time, Mr. *Robert Bruce*, and, Mr. *John Wicleh*, having such a convincing assurance of the truth thereof.

1. As to Mr. *Bruce*, after he had studied the laws in France, and was by his father's direction commanded after his return to wait on the court and session of his affairs there, having a patent insured for his being made one of the Lords of the session; it was then the Lord began to work mightily upon his conscience, so as he could find no rest until he went to St. Andrews to Mr. Andrew Melvil, to study Theology; which his mother so much opposed, till he first denuded himself of some lands and casualties wherein he was infest (his father at that time being a baron of greatest quality in the nation) and thus did he willingly shake off all impediments, laying aside his court-apparel, to follow the Lord: But, whilst he was there, did not want some sharp conflicts in this matter, so as, walking at a certain time in the fields with that holy man Mr. James Melvil, he said, "Before I cast myself again in that torment of conscience, which I have had in resisting the call of God to the ministry, I would rather choose to pass through a fire of brimstone, were it half a mile long. After he had been for the truth enforced to leave the country, (which was several years after this, and his settling in the ministry) upon his return he was advertised by chancellor Seton, of the king's express order to discharge him to preach; yet said, he would not use his authority, but only request him to desist for nine or ten days, which he consented to, thinking it was a small import for so

short a time: But he quickly found how deep the smallest ceding upon his master's interest may draw, so (as he shewed after) "that night his body was cast into a fever with the terror of his conscience, and he promised never to obey their commandments any more."

The manner of his death I have elsewhere touched. He had much longing desires, before that, for his change; so as sometimes he said, "I wonder how I am kept by my master so long here, since I have lived already two years in violence; meaning, that he was then 72 years of age. From a grave and eminent minister of Christ, who was intimate with Mr. Bruce, I had this further account, how one day visiting him at his house, it was long before he came out of his study; but found by his face he had been weeping bitterly, and after, told him some occasion of his grief, that having heard of the sharp sufferings of a godly minister of the gospel, in another country for the truth, yea, upon the same account for which he had suffered confinement himself, he said, "If I had been faithful, I might have also shed some of my blood for Christ as well as he, but he hath got the crown from us all: And that my grief was not for what befel that godly man, but for myself."

He had also related from him in private, a strange dream, "How he had seen a great long book with black boards flying in the air, with many black fowls like crows about the same; and, as it touched any of them, they fell down dead: Upon which he heard a voice, which *he said*, was as audible; as he then heard him speak to him, *Hac est ira Dei contra pastores Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*. Whereupon he presently fell a weeping, and crying to God, that he might be kept faithful, and not be one of those, that were thus struck down by a touch of his wrath, through deserting the truth. And said, when he awakened, he found the pillow all wet and drenched with his tears. This was at a remarkable time also of the defection of many ministers there from the way of the Lord.

SECT. 13. This further account about that famous servant

of Christ, Mr. John Welsh, to what hath been formerly published, I shall here give in some few particulars, which I hope may be confirming and edifying to the reader. 1. That witness he bore for the Lord, upon his journey to the assembly of the church at Aberdeen, whereon his after-imprisonment and exile was stated; and about which he had been so much pressed upon his spirit to go thither, for owning the liberties of the church, which so visibly were then struck at by the magistrate. His words I shall set down.

“ Never a greater providence found I in my life-time, than I found this last time in my journey: And here I thank my God for it, and I avow that, if this blood of mine should go for it, it was acceptable service we did to God that day. I know there were many, who sent up their prayers to God for the maintenance of this liberty of the church, which I am sure the Lord heard. And I can say, the room was never yet that I came to, but I found the Lord meeting me there, and confirming that as acceptable to him, so as I never found a sweeter providence since I was born, and see that the Lord’s hand is not shortened. O Scotland, O that thou wouldest repent and mourn for the contempt of so great a light that hath shined in thee, thou shouldest see as glorious a day of the power of God in this island, as ever was seen in any church before.

What is it to the Lord? And, let any think of it what they will, I know who has approved me: For it is the running of the gospel through this whole island, and that the net of Christ may be spread over all, that if it were possible we may fang in a world into it, that they might not perish, is that which we seek. And when I look to that eternity of wrath abiding the wicked, I must say, Who would not pity a world of sinners?” This was preached by him at Air, a very little before his imprisonment; which having occasion to see as it was written from his mouth, I thought truly worthy of remark, and to set down here.

2. As also that testimony he gave in public against that great assault the church was then meeting with from prelacy.

“ I know there will come a shaking time, and the glory of the world will bewitch many; but, tell me, received ye the Spirit of God by this lordly ministry of the prelates, or by the pure ministry of his servants? And shall we *begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh*? This truth we have believed, professed and subscribed; the king and the nobility abjuring also, and condemning that wicked hierarchy of the church.

This is a thing that hath been spoken long since that there behoved to be a trial in Scotland. If this new erected domination be it, I leave it to the Lord; but if ever I had familiarity with him, and if ever his Spirit sealed any part of the Scripture to me, the purity of the gospel, and kingdom that hath been in this island, was from God. And that this new-erected kingdom of prelacy is not from him, was sealed to my conscience; and those are names of blasphemy, (for I count him a blasphemer, who takes to him the proper titles that belong to the Lord) since there is but *one Lord*; and *ye shall not be called such*, saith Christ to his disciples; *but if any desire to be great, let him be your servant*. Is it not the mark of the woman clothed with the sun, that is persecuted in the wilderness, and has the moon under her feet? but it is the mark of the beast, that speaks blasphemies against God, and makes war with the saints.” 3. Some predictions he then had of what was to come, were indeed remarkable, as he expressed in public, near the same time where he thus speaks; “ Prepare you for crosses, for I am thinking there is something to follow, on this falling of the stars to the earth, and that these golden apples are offered to ministers, and men are become earthly-minded, who were wont to be capable of spiritual things; there must be a fiery trial to follow with it. *And at another time*, there is a sword coming, which shall be drunk with blood; the Lord knows from whence it shall come, but I cannot be quit of it, but that this land, which is defiled with blood; must be cleansed with blood again: but, if we could be humbled, and run to God by prayer, it may be, he would send peace in our days. Remember this poor church, that is like to be brought under with their

masked and menfsworn abominations, which are creeping in piece and piece. Remember thefe things with tears, and I am affured that the Lord fhall fend as glorious a deliverance to this church, as ever was heard of." Thefe few notes, having fuch affurance of the truth thereof, I thought worthy to be noticed. That testimony he gives alfo to the crofs of Chrift after his exile, in a letter to my lady Mar out of France, having the fame by me, I fhall here touch. "I thank my God in Chrift, for all the gracious confolation it pleafeth him to vouchfafe on me in the days of my affliction, whereby I perceive the good pleafure of his will to minifter unto me comfort, that, not only with patience, but with joy, I may bear his crofs; and I dare not but give testimony, that the Lord has been faithful in his promifes, and has remembered his mercy and covenant towards me, has made his yoke eafy and his burden light, and has made his confolations abound, far beyond all that ever I yet fuffered. It is true, it cannot but be fometimes grievous, to remember the glory that I have feen both in public and private in the communion of the faints, from which I am now exiled; yet it pleafeth my Lord to minifter fuch tranquillity of mind unto me, that I cannot but wonder of, and of thefe exceeding great and incredible joys, and wherewith I now fee by experience it pleafes him to accompany his own crofs. O how sweet a thing is it to fuffer for Chrift! How glorious and rich treasures are there, that lie hid under that vile and ignominious veil of the crofs! The world, yea, the princes and the wife of this world, know not the glorious and unfpeakable joys that are joined with the crofs; yea, who knows it, but he that hath experience thereof? Certainly if the adverfaries knew what joy it were to the children of God, to be under the crofs, inftead of being instruments thereof, they fhould envy them for fo great a good.

Blessed be my Lord, that ever it was his will, and that it entred into his heart, thus to make manifefi his love to me, and to vouchfafe this grace, in caufing me to fuffer for his name's fake fo much. I thank my God in Chrift; for unto

me it is a fure argument of his accounting me worthy of that kingdom, for the which he hath caused me with some gladness and joy to suffer, and for the which to give some readiness to suffer more: Surely affliction is a testimony and seal of the love of God.

Sect. 14. In this hour of trial then on the church of Scotland, when prelacy was making so formidable an assault, it is truly worthy of remark, and to be transmitted to after-times; with what zeal and seriousness the faithful ministers of Christ were then concerned to stand in the breach, as intercessors betwixt an highly provoked God, and his people, under whose hand so great a ruin was like to fall; which in two instances, (besides many else might be given) I shall touch, having such assured evidence of the truth, and certainty thereof.

1. In the year 1596, upon Tuesday the 30th of March, the ministers and other commissioners of the general assembly met at Edinburgh, found it duty by themselves to convene in the church at nine o'clock, one of the doors being shut, and the other kept open for the meeting only, for humbling themselves and wrestling with God, to pursue a national, as well as a personal reconciliation, the whole number amounting to four hundred of ministers, and some select Christians and elders of the church with them; where after prayer, and Mr. John Davidson (whose life I have elsewhere touched) chosen to preside amongst them, he caused the third and thirty-fourth chapters of *Ezekiel* to be read, and then said, "Seing it pleased the Lord to move them to choose him, who was the unworthiest and unmeetest of the number for that place of a preacher that day, they were not to look that he came to be censured by them, but to use the authority of a teacher, as to hearers, without any prejudice to that liberty given them of the Lord, to try the spirits, whether they be of God or not.

He shewed what was the end of their meeting, that it was the confession of sins, and to promise a forsaking thereof, to turn unto the Lord, and enter into a new covenant and league

with him, that thus by repentance they might be the meeter to provoke others to the same."

In which he was followed with that power for moving of their spirits in application, that within an hour after they were entred into the church, they looked with another countenance than that wherewith they entred. And whilst he exhorted them to that retired work of meditation and acknowledgment of their sins, whilst then together, for the space of a quarter of an hour, they were thus humbling themselves, yea, such a joint concurrence with those sighs and groans, and with shedding of tears amongst the most, every one provoking another by their example, and the teacher himself by his, so as the very church resounded, and that place might worthily be called Bochim, for the like of that day had not been seen in Scotland since the reformation.

After prayer and public confession, he treated upon that Scripture, Luke xii. 22. wonderfully assisted by the Spirit of the Lord for the work, both of casting down and raising up, which exercise continued, till near one o'clock afternoon. And, when they were to dissolve, they did there solemnly join, and enter into a new league and covenant with God, holding up their hands thereto, with that seriousness and weight, as was a moving sight to all present. And that afternoon, by the general assembly, was the renewing of the covenant in particular synods concluded.

Sec't. 15. At the synod of Fife met at Dunfermline, *May* 12, 1596, where Mr. James Melvin did preside as Moderator, the articles for reformation of the church set down in the last assembly, were read in public, and ordained to be inserted; and thereafter did Mr. Melvin gravely discourse upon the last chapter of Joshua, with that evidence and demonstration of the power of God therewith, as all who were there were enforced to a strange and unusual motion, with groans and tears, yea then to some retired personal meditation for searching each of them their own ways.

And after some time did he make public confession, in the name of the rest, of 'unthankfulness, undutifulness, negli-

gence, coldness of spirit, instability, unsuitableness in speech and conversation, as too visibly fashioned after the world; yea, thus with trembling and weeping, for the misusage of so honourable a calling, and the fear and dread of that weight of the wrath of God lying over them, for the blood of so many souls belonging to their charge, did then weep bitterly, and pour out their souls before the Lord, pleading for grace, and an effectual help to be strengthened against these evils. After which, the Lord having been so marvelously present, a minute of this solemn work was by consent of the synod to be inserted, both for their own use, and an example to posterity, in the public register.

CHAP. VII.

Seet. 1. HAVING some occasion to touch this subject of the Lord's marvellous appearances for the church in Scotland, in that great work of reformation from popery, wherein I designed only but a short account, which otherwise, were it followed, should be a work by itself; before I leave this, I hope it may not be unsuitable to speak a few words concerning the present state of the church of Christ there, which, with some confidence, as before the Lord, I may say, is far from bitterness of spirit, prejudice at the persons of any, or intended reflection that way; but for the truth's sake, upon which the trials of his people have been so remarkably there stated, which in some few particulars, I hope in the words of truth, and soberness; I shall here offer.

Seet. 2. First, it is known, how very sad, as to all visible appearances, the case of the church there hath been, and now is, by the blessed disposal of the Lord, whose ways are holy and just, and thus graciously sees fit to assign a different lot and service, not only to several ages, but to particular churches: He hath in faithfulness put this cup of trial and affliction in his people's hand; and now, for sixteen years past, hath a most remarkably suffering time gone over their head, not as to the ministers there only, who found grace to

abide faithful, and keep the word of his patience in this hour of great temptation; but most universally through the whole land, to Christians of all ranks and conditions, yea, in such a manner, with that frequency of assaults, as I judge, if a particular account were given, it could hardly be credited at a distance; and, which is astonishing, that no length of time, no appearances of the Lord, nor these most obvious remarks the adversary might have had of his hand being against them, both in their councils and actions for this end, have yet been a lett thereto: But at this day their violence seems to be a length beyond all that hath formerly been, and the waters to grow without any discernible abatement thereof; yea, I must say, such a persecution under these circumstances is now followed, as cannot easily find a parallel from any times past.

Sec. 3. For the cause and grounds hereof, though it may be judged, that few at a distance are so unconcerned, with whom the protestant interest hath any regard, as not to enquire and know, why the reformed church of Scotland should be thus exposed to those sore and continued sufferings (nor hath there hitherto wanted some serious endeavours for clearing of this to the world) yet I may say (under some weight of present duty, and I hope it may not be unseasonable, or unnecessary) am pressed to give this short account to any, who enquire, and would design an establishment of their spirit in the way of the Lord, "That in opposition to prelacy, so expressly contrary to the rule of the Scripture, and an adherence to this cause and truth, that Jesus Christ is a king, and hath a kingdom and government in his church distinct from the kingdoms of the world, or any civil government there; a truth, to which he did himself so expressly bear witness, and sealed with his blood, and for standing fast by these dearly purchased liberties thereof, hath this sad and long continued persecution of his church and people there been observably stated." Nor can this be strange, that such as ever knew the fellowship of the cross of Christ, and what it was to have their soul under the power and authority of

the truth, should be found so tenacious and peremptory in their testimony to so great a piece of his interest, whilst it is now called for in the season thereof, yea to rejoice in their sufferings upon such an account, when these are so undeniably clear, about which I may say, (not of late) I have fought to have my own spirit persuaded.

1. That the great lawgiver and head of his church doth so expressly discharge all lordship and dominion over his church; yea therewith also all titles of honour to be assumed by them, not to these only who by his institution are fixed officers of his house, until his second coming, but even to his apostles, who then were extraordinary officers both as to their calling and endowments in the church, as is clear, Luke xxii. 24, 25. Matth. xx. 25.

2. That it is manifest, the government of the church under the New Testament is so evidently aristocratic, with a parity amongst the officers of Christ in the administration of their power, and a subordination of the lesser parts to the greater, and for this that apostolic pattern and practice held forth for after-ages so express, and which so clearly holds out, not only what was *de facto* their practice, but as a rule binding *de jure* to the church, and a piece of the word written for our instruction, to be kept till the *second coming of Christ*, 1 Tim. vi. ver. 4, Yea, on such moral and perpetual grounds is held forth, as, in Acts xv. and other Scriptures convincingly clear.

3. That it is manifest, (and I judge few can be so grossly ignorant amongst the adversaries themselves to debate this) that the name, office, qualifications and ordination of a bishop, held forth in the word, hath no respect further, than to all the ministers of the gospel; and that a bishop, which, in the original, is an overseer of the flock only, and a preaching presbyter, is one and the same office: For as the one holds forth *ejus industriam*, so the other *sapientie maturitatem*, which I leave to any to consider in comparing these Scriptures, Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 2. Phil. i. 1. Tit. i. 5. considered with verse 7.

4. That it is demonstratively clear, Jesus Christ hath given to the church, and officers thereof, the power of the keys for discipline and government, *in foro externo*; and where that Scripture gradation is so observable for the church's edification in the way of discipline, and censures, that it is from one to two or more, and from them to the church, as Mat. xviii. 15, 17. Likewise from a lesser to an higher judicatory, as Acts xv. Whilst, on the contrary, by this establishment of prelacy, the course is visibly retrograde, from many to one; in whom the final decision must rest.

And it is sure, if the rule of the written word have weight; the government of the church under the New Testament is committed, not to one, but to a plurality of presbyters, who are not only to feed, but to oversee, by an express appointment of the Holy Ghost, Acts xx. 28. Yea, the highest acts of jurisdiction, such as excommunication is committed to the church and ordinary officers thereof, we may see, Matth. xviii. 16, 17. 1 Cor. v. 4. Yea, how this was not practised by one, but by many, 2 Cor. ii. 2. *That censure being inflicted by many, &c.* As also the power of ordination, 1 Tim. iv. ver. 14. which was to be by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, so as both the keys of doctrine and discipline are expressly committed to the community of presbyters, without giving the greatest Prelate, that ever claimed such a title, any room by himself there.

5. In all the New Testament, such an office as this of Prelate, distinct from an ordinary Pastor, cannot possibly be found: But whilst that roll and catalogue of the officers of the church of Christ, and the qualifications, even to the office of a Deacon, is so express, both as to ordinary and extraordinary officers, is clear, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11, 12. There can be found no such office of Scripture and apostolic institution here, as a bishop over his pretended diocese: And I hope it is not under debate, that the Scripture and pattern of the apostolic church is more ancient and authentic than any practice of after-times, whilst the streams began early to be polluted, and this mystery of iniquity in that pretended

hierarchy, and precedent in the church, did, even in the days of the apostles, begin to stir.

6. It is clear, that whatever of a double honour by the Scripture is given and allowed to officers of the church, is upon no ground of pre-eminence in jurisdiction, but their *labouring in the word and doctrine*, 1 Tim. v. 17. which I judge is an act, whereon no Prelate will challenge a singularity above the ordinary Pastors of the church, nor upon that ground, Mal. ii. 7. *that the priests' lips should preserve knowledge*, who account the preaching of the word so far below the grandeur of their office, except at some extraordinary and festival time.

7. As there is a beautiful order in the Christian church, which we may see in the first times thereof, and a further degree and place, which these extraordinary officers of Christ, his apostles then had above ordinary pastors, whose endowments also were extraordinary for that time, which I judge no bishop can claim to; yet is there no such thing in an office of the same kind, as a majority of power or priority of degree; not an apostle above an apostle, or one evangelist above another, or one deacon above another: And should there be only in the office of ministers an inequality? It is sure, the Scripture hath no such warrant for inverting such an excellent order.

8. And is it not on the same ground of an expedience and warrantableness of a bishop over a diocese, or a primate over a national church, for preserving unity, that, by undeniable consequence an universal bishop over all the churches must follow, as a gradual difference betwixt them? Yea, how the Romish hierarchy did first begin there, it may be demonstrably evident.

9. If that power given to the officers of the church of Christ be alone ministerial, to declare and execute his will, and but one Lord, over his house, it must then be undeniable, that prelacy is inconsistent therewith, which is so clear an incroaching on his regal and despotical power, as master over his house. And it is remarkable, how the apostle Peter,

on whom any such claim of hierarchy in the church hath been first founded, is so express, 1 Pet. v. 3. *Not as being Lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock.*

10. Doth not this office visibly bring therewith a confounding two distinct jurisdictions and callings in one person, as it is incompatible with the kingdom of Christ, which is *spiritual, and not of this world*; so also with the condition of his servants, who are not to entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, but give themselves to the word and prayer, so as the apostles counted even the service of tables, and administering to the poor, extrinsic to their proper work and calling.

11. Besides, that the sad and undeniable experience of this way, as destructive to the church, and that which is the end of the church-government, the edification of the body, doth not this of its own nature most evidently tend to bring in ambition into the church? Against which the apostle John with such indignation speaks in his second epistle, ver. 9. in the person of Diotrephes, to give loose reins to profaniry, whilst that which should be the proper work of many to oversee, (*and who is sufficient for these things?*) is here put wholly over upon one, and but a shadow thereof left to inferior officers.

12. And can it be strange, that all who truly love the truth there, should with such seriousness be pressed in their adherence to the government of Christ in his church, which they know to be that good and old way, wherein so innumerable a company of most known, tender, solid and lively Christians, since that blessed reformation of the church there from Popery, *have received the spirit*, and been sealed to the day of redemption; Yea, have found such abounding comforts of the Holy Ghost to their testimony, and suffering upon this interest, and withal hath had so eminent an attestation, by the conversion as well as building up of many thousands, now taken up into glory, "and pillars in his temple where they shall no more go out?" Yea, such a piece of the truth of Christ, to which so great a witness hath been borne,

by many of the most eminent servants of the Lord, of whom in sobriety I may say, There hath not been greater known to the church, since the times of the apostles, by whose wrestlings, prayers, tears and sufferings, it hath been, through the good hand of the Lord upon them, transmitted to us, and which is not our interest alone, but a trust we stand under to posterity.

I shall but further add that indispensable obligation the churches of Christ in Britain and Ireland more particularly now stand under, by the oath and covenant of God, which, though it were in a thing indifferent, should be determining; how much more, when this solemn tie is but super-added to that, which in itself doth so clearly, and on moral grounds, bind and oblige?

Sect. 4. It may be matter of astonishment, how much the sufferings of the church of Scotland have been heightened, and now are, by the adventuring of the ministers of Christ there, upon the authority of their Master, to preach the gospel amongst the people, notwithstanding of the magistrates discountenance and prohibition: when both a convincing necessity, and their longing desires to hear, did enforce a call hereto: yea, how this should be challenged in a land, where the Scripture, and doctrine of the reformed religion is not publicly disowned.

It hath been far from the least intended irritation, to provoke any, much less the magistrate, I can say, with the furthest assurance, and would judge, that the adversaries themselves do allow these so far the use and exercise of reason, nor can want some enforcing conviction of this on their conscience; that they would not expose themselves to such visible hazard, labour, weariness, with many pressing difficulties that way; yea, with so little of any known outward encouragement, if some greater interest did not preponder it, which should lie more near than all the enjoyments in the earth; that it is the service of their blessed master, for which nothing must be too dear so as they “ may finish their course with joy, and this ministry, which they have received of the

Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." But, since many, upon mistake or at a distance, may be prejudged, or put to some enquiry about this, I hope it shall not be found unnecessary to give this short touch, what pressing constraint of duty the ministers of Christ there are under, for adventuring thus, and on grounds so convincingly clear.

1. That it is a matter of confession, as to their ministry, and the authority thereof from Jesus Christ alone, though in a mediate way by the church, and upon an hazard greater than all the kings of the earth can threaten, which is not theirs to subject unto the civil power; yea, with this further enforcement thereto, that this restraint now put upon them to exercise their ministry, is expressly owned by virtue of that supremacy, assumed by the magistrate over all church causes, as well as persons, and as being the fountain of church-power: A claim which, without the furthest of blasphemy, is incommunicable to angels or men, which is the alone prerogative of the Son of God, the head and builder of his church.

2. That their ministry both in its office and exercise comes under no sentence of the civil magistrate, whatever subjection they own as to their persons and outward concerns: Nor can a restraint be put upon them here, to make void that authority and warrant they have from Jesus Christ, and conveyed by his church, but as an ecclesiastical censure.

3. That it is clear, the great commission wherewith they are clothed to preach the gospel, bounds them to no particular place, but their primary relation is such to the church universal, so as, wherever they be, and upon an evident call, they stand there related, as the ministers of Christ, to dispense his ordinances.

4. And is it not morally binding and of force to the times of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, *That the Priests should preserve knowledge, and the people to seek the law at their mouth, as the messengers of the Lord of Hosts?* Mal. i. 7. Yea, should be the more pressing at such a day, when evident hazard is to many from Atheism, Quakerism, and Po-

pery: and many also ready to faint under the pressures of an afflicting time: How onerous and pressing a duty it is *to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak?* 1 Theff. v.

14. to draw forth the breasts to the hungry, unto whom the ordinances of Christ are suited to be as their very natural food, and have such continued need to be confirmed thereby?

5. Yea it is under a greater penalty than any magistrate can threaten. They stand accountable for discharge of that talent given them of the Lord, *with a necessity laid upon them to preach the gospel of Christ*, 1 Cor. ix. 16. Who have their master's eyes continually upon them, how they answer to that power and trust committed to his ministers, that in season and out of season they should follow their work; and no latitude here for subjecting it to human rules, where the great law-giver hath given forth his mind.

6. No contempt of the magistrate's authority or just power can be obtruded in this matter, except they own it upon this, that the ministers of the gospel in Scotland dare admit no unlimited or implicate obedience to their acts, but with a preference herein to the express commands of their master; and whether it be better to obey God than man, (if they own subjection to the Scripture) let their own conscience then judge.

7. It is sure, no such debate was in the primitive times of the church, whilst the Roman emperors, (though heathen) were in things lawful owned, and subjected to, as the magistrate, when the ministers of Christ then, in opposition to all their edicts, and greatest fury of persecution, ceased not to preach the gospel: Yea, and this way (that is now called so irregular and seditious) was not the Christian church, for the first two centuries, with such marvellous appearance of the power of God, brought in and built up? And as it is the same truth and doctrine, which is now preached, I hope, that with much confidence we may own the same scope to pre-judge none, much less the magistrates in their right; but to pursue the treaty of the gospel with all seriousness for their embracing that great offer of reconciliation by Christ, and to

press the indispensibly necessary study of holiness. But if magistrates this day, in being Christians, pretend some higher power and authority, I hope they must take themselves to the Bible for this warrant, and shew if they have such power given, pretend what they will, which is destructive to the truth, and to counteract the express institutions of Jesus Christ in his word.

Oh, how sad and astonishing is it, that when the great lawgiver and Head of his church hath given princes and rulers so fully their due, and established their rights, they will thus dare to rob him of his, and keep no bounds nor marches with the kingdom of Christ, but will thus break over to invade his interest, *Who must reign until all his enemies be made his footstool*, and assuredly will carry back the war on themselves, and in his blessed time appear against such evil neighbours, as will not be wise, and instructed this day, who are the judges of the earth, and see these dreadful marks have been of an holy avenging God in the quarrel of his church upon the greatest kingdoms and states!

8. This great trust, committed to the ministers of the gospel, is not theirs only, but the interest of the posterity and generations to come, to stand close by the truth, and these dear-bought liberties of the kingdom of Christ.

9. I must further add that convincing and undeniable seal the Lord hath given to his own ordinances, and ministry of his servants now of late, when under most visible threatenings and discountenance of the magistrate, is such, as this continued and amazing opposition thereto, seems to be a more than ordinary counteracting of light, and doing despite even to the Spirit of grace, under such clear evidences of his work.

Scct. 5. I must further add, in giving some account of the present state of the church in Scotland, now amidst those sad and astonishing times, which have of late gone over her, how demonstratively manifest this is, if our eyes be not in a strange manner with-held from considering the work of God, and his appearances in mercy as well as

judgment, that he hath not forsaken his church and people there, nor doth his truth and tenderness fail; but is such, as we may this day with no less astonishment see, yea, to arrest our eyes herewith, in the great restoring providences of this time, than of such as have been hitherto most breaking; and the gain thereof, for all that is come, which I fear not to say, hath a visible proportion to the greatest sufferings and loss; yea, rather to exceed the same. And whilst we wait and wonder, that the holy God comes not our way, who are thus too ready to stint our thoughts by limiting of him, he calls us to see him meeting his people another way, beyond all they ever could have thought of. This being a duty of such weight, and that with some evident suitableness falls in with the present subject, to observe the great things of the Lord for his church; yea a duty (could we be faithful therein) which wants not a promise to have more given in, and laid to our hands for observation; I shall but in a few words touch some convincing and memorable providences for his church there, as some part of that rent, and testimony of these sad suffering times, to the way of the Lord.

1. This witness we must bear to what in these times he hath done for his church there. And the greatest Atheists may see, that, not in an ordinary way of providence hath her interest and preservation been hitherto carried on; but whilst all visible advantages were on the adversaries side, their enmity at such a height, nor their will wanting to their power, yea, with such frequent assaults and different methods for a breaking of his poor church, which we have seen with our eyes; yet is this truth sure, "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." The church sinking, but not perished, and amidst the flame, but not consumed; to witness that her God lives, and is still the same; yea, doth own the same interest and cause, though his appearance now be in another manner.

2. We have yet seen, if we would seriously observe, no remarkable concurrence of sad and crushing things have been from the Lord for his people's trial, but with some obvious

tendency thereof to as manifold an use and advantage, whilst in this, human reason could never have supposed what hath been the product of these strange times, or have judged the conclusion by the premises.

3. In this time we have been called to that great appearance of the Lord against his adversaries in their breaking, turning them out of their places, who had first moved, as the great leading instruments to bring in prelacy into Scotland, and cause so sad a ruin there; Yea, how this was in so short a time, when least expected, that divers of them had not three years together, to enjoy that sad conquest they had fought, to found on the ruins of the work of God there, and share in that spoil, which with such confidence they had then divided amongst them.

What I write hereof, with some confidence I may say, is with no prejudice to the persons of such; but should own the more tenderness and compassion to any, when once brought low: But since the holy judgment of the Lord, and his glory herein, is so eminently concerned, and that this convincing witness to the truth hath been written in greatest letters for the observation of the age, I could not pass it without some remark; yea, to bring the remembrance thereof before others, who will adventure to follow that way, on which the holy God hath set up so remarkable a beacon before their eyes.

Oh that such would consider, what reward these have got, who so vigorously then acted for the Prelatic interest in Scotland, and how the foundation of it was laid in the visible ruin of such as were the greatest promoters thereof, as a public warning from the Lord against such a way, and that the curse then of Hiel the Bethelite, for building of that accursed place, against which the Lord served such an interdiction, hath not there fallen to the ground, and I am persuaded shall be made more remarkably yet in the close! Yea, how that great man, who then acted in the highest place and authority, should at last, after so remarkable a fall, die in a remote place of the world, and in a kind of exile, (whatever cover it had) who turned so many of the godly, both mini-

sters and others, from their dwellings, and some most eminent from their own land, and dipt his hand in the blood of some faithful and choice witnesses to his truth; And his death by so strange a fall, and in that astonishing manner circumstantiate, as hath been shewed by some who were then in the place.

It is true, that the judgments of the Lord are a great depth, and with much fear and sobriety should we adventure to apply the same: But there may be no less to fear unfaithfulness in our being not more observers thereof, when in such legible characters they are oft written, so as all who run may read.

4. That public witness, which hath in these times been given to the truth and cause, (on which the church there is suffering) by some at their death, who did before vigorously oppose themselves thereto, as it is an evidence of the Lord's eminent appearance, and dominion he exerciseth over the consciences of men, is a seal also to his truth, with the dying breath of such who were once known haters thereof, which should call for a grave remark. There have not wanted signal instances hereof; but, amongst others publicly known and notour, I shall give this general touch of two gentlemen of considerable note, and interest in the nation, the one in the west some years ago, the other but of late in the south, whose consciences were most remarkably seized on by the dread and terror of God, to the amazement and instruction of all about them, most especially for their being involved in the public defection of the time, and for concurrence in the abridgement of the covenant; which, after much wrestling with tears, whilst the pain and anguish of their spirits was discernibly above their sickness, they did then witness how, above all, this guilt did most pressingly touch them, and lay in the way betwixt their souls and peace with God: Yea, with all seriousness, beseeching others not to adventure on that which drew so deep on their consciences; though I must also add, they were not thus more public instructors to the nation, how dreadful it is to give the interests of the church a

wrong touch, than examples of the freedom and riches of grace.

5. We have seen a change of weapons the adversary hath made, for having a snare thus laid in ambush, and with a smiling face, whilst adders poison was under their lips; but yet so, as the bait with their furthest care could not hide the hook, but that the Lord hath still graciously helped to some clear discerning, and advertance thereto, even whilst the net was most closely spread under their feet: Yea, that most dreadful essay, that ever they followed, (with Balak) to lay a stumbling block in the church's way for her halting, as the most assured mean to prevail, and divide the godly amongst themselves, hath been in some measure, through the good hand of the Lord, made void, and I trust shall be yet more, by some close uniting of his people's hearts there together, and with a more watching and jealous eye over the plausible insinuations of such who are the known adversaries of the truth. Nor can it be passed without a remark of the righteous God's recompensing them with breaches of another kind.

6. The tried faith and establishment of his people in this searching time, is a gain beyond the saddest loss we can reckon on, 1 Pet. i. 7. *That the trial of your faith, which is more precious than that of gold, may be unto praise, honour and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ;* about which their enemies have been found liars, who had reckoned ere now to break and faint them from their duty. And it is sure, the more sharp and shaking a trial is, it is so much the more one of those rare opportunities of a Christian's life to be seriously followed, that it be not lost; yea, which, with some proportion to the measure thereof, should bring in more abundant joy and peace, than any loss or grief that hath gone before. And is such an account, that through grace hath been given to this church there, to be small in our eyes?

7. That honourable testimony given to the cross of Christ by so many suffering witnesses, to the conviction and astonishment of their adversaries, is such, (could an account be par-

ticularly given of what hath been remarkable and public this way) as should be a sweet and large record for confirming others in the truth: How they never knew divine strength more sensibly, and the power of Christ resting on them, than when called to suffer for his name; and were most pressed above their own strength, that there is under the cross a length beyond report or testimony of others to be known, what sweet hours of fellowship with God are to be then found. Yea, whilst something more than ordinary hath met in their trial and suffering for the truth, how some peculiar, and more than ordinary allowance did then wait upon it, and what company the Scripture hath been sometimes in a prison, or their necessary retirement from others, through the violence of these times, beyond all they ever knew hereof before.

8. We have seen also the truth then have a most discernible triumph, when the adversary seemed most to prevail; yea, thus to gain that interest by a suffering testimony thereto, even on a scaffold so as the begun fall of Prelacy, and most remarkable spreading of the kingdom of Christ through the land, might be seen to follow; yea that, which would have looked as hopeless, and an irrecoverable stroke, of which, in an ordinary way none could see a comfortable out-gate thereof; to have a most effectual tendency to the church's greatest advantage.

9. We have seen these marvellous providences which have followed the church there in such remarkably sad and trying times, that, when it looked as a winter season, then should the spring break up, and the wilderness blossom, by so great an increase to the church, beyond all that had formerly been shewn, when outward things did most smile: A people formed for the Lord, and made willing in the day of his power to follow him, in these parts, where, but a few years before, and whilst no visible distress did then lie in the way, a few serious Christians would have been a sign and a wonder to all about them.

Yea, how thus the church hath been fed under the rod,

and the scattering of the ministers of Christ through the land, by the violence of these times, to have tended more for the spreading of the gospel, than could ever in an ordinary way have been looked for in their former state. Oh! are our eyes shut, so as not to see this marvellous work of the Lord, which he hath brought about in those times, which, without a strange inadvertence, may be seen to be the immediate finger of God; and something above all second causes, how such a death-like wound should make way for so blessed and effectual a healing, yea, which may be a comforting presage of some excellent building yet of his house there, by such a preparing of materials for the same?

10. Thus hath the Lord appeared there in this time, to cause a suffering lot be the first mean to enter and fix some most remarkably in his way, and for a serious owning of the truth, than which nothing, upon any ordinary grounds raised, could have been less hoped; and thus their hearts gained and pulled in by that mean, whereon so many have stumbled and broke, that surely it may be seen; this must be an immediate touch of his power before which there is no standing.

Were it expedient, I could give in some special instances to witness this, and I hope there be not a few such, who can date their first acquaintance with the truth of the gospel, not only from a suffering time so universally upon the church, but a peculiar cast thereof in their own personal case, and in such a marvellous way, how Jesus Christ did thus endear and commend himself to their soul.

11. That he hath graciously taken some service off his people's hand, under much visible weakness, and when they had but a little strength to keep by his word, and not to deny his name; Yea, to contend and wrestle against so strong a tide of opposition to the truth, is a gain to be reckoned upon, inexpressibly beyond all the loss and sufferings of the time; for thus hath a rent been paid in to the praise and glory of the church's Head, and more honourable testimony, which could not in that manner have been accessible in the greatest outward calm of a prosperous state.

12. How remarkably hath the Lord prevented the scandal of the cross, as to many in this time, with that surprising outcome of encouragement and resolution in some to adventure for the Lord and embark with his suffering interests, where least could have been expected; yea, in such, where an eager pursuit, and gripping after the world, would have been most feared, from what was their natural disposition, to commend that marvellous conquering power of grace, before which there is no possible standing, that can make it then easy for men to part with their right-eye, or their right-hand.

And hath it not been astonishing, how far many have been found above themselves, or what in an ordinary way could have been looked for in their appearance for the truth, and confession before men, when they were of the Lord called forth hereunto?

13. That in this strange trial, which hath occasioned such great thoughts of heart hitherto, and whilst the adversaries strength lay there, that they were the rod of God in his hand for his church's humbling, *yet hath he not stirred up all his anger, but hath stayed his rough wind in the day of his east wind*, and hath still been a sanctuary and hiding-place to his scattered people; how, in such a strange circuit of providence, he loseth no time in bringing forth his work, but every new step thereof with such observable advantage in the fittest season; and by withdrawing visible encouragements, hath thus the more endeared his people's mercies, by his own immediate appearance, and some surprising relief, *when he saw their power was gone, and that there was none shut up or left*.

14. These remarkable providences, which have attended the godly, and so many suffering and desolate families for the truth there, amidst such manifold outward straits and difficulties as a witness, I must here give in for the Lord, and in behalf of his truth, before this generation; and, I doubt not, shall be yet matter of a sweet after-reckoning, how such were carried through, in a way, so contrary to their thought, and surprising, as hath caused them after with greatest asto-

nishment reflect thereupon; and how *they thirsted not when he led them through the desert, &c.* Isai. xlviii. 21.

15. This also may be obvious, what an actual discovery this strange persecution from Prelacy hath made, for bringing forth to the light, as a preventing mercy to the church, such, whose trading more close under ground, might have tended more to obstruct the interest of the gospel, than now, when the cover is taken off; and how thus the Lord hath led them forth with the workers of iniquity.

16. I shall but add, which I am sure that the adversaries of the truth there must see, and be enforced to confess, if they would give their own conscience a hearing; how in both their counsels and actings, and all these essays they have had to bear down the church of Scotland, a divine hand hath visibly appeared to withstand them therein, and to an ensnaring them in the work of their own hand; yea, have been thus often determined, but by an unseen power over them, to fall on that way, than which nothing could have given their interest a greater dash (and as though intentionally they had moved) for the church's good. O that such would but so far open their eyes! yea, let the nations about consider the work of God herein, what hath been the product of all the counsels, statutes, acts and most vigorous essays in the execution thereof, to bear down the truth, and for wreathing the yoke of prelacy on the church there, but to commend the government of Christ, according to his own institution, more universally to the nation, to promote non-conformity, with the furthest abhorrence (even by all ranks) of this prelatie interest; so as it is demonstrably evident besides these saving effects of the power of the gospel, they are sixfold more this day in number, to whom that way is made distasteful and grievous, than was sixteen years past.

Thus hath the truth prevailed, and been found stronger than they who would oppose themselves thereto. And for all that is come, are we not enforced to see, that the Lord hath not forsaken his church there, but her gleanings (I doubt not to say) are yet preferable to the vintage of many

others? O that men would give glory to the Lord and cease to follow such a war, in contending with him, whom they have now taken to be their party! But, if not, fall they must and be broken by his hand, *who cutteth off the spirits of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth.*

CHAP. VIII.

WHILST we see in the blessed disposal of the Lord, that different lot he assigns to particular churches, as well as persons, and that it is not then worst, when such exercising and sharp trials do most abound; there seems some further cause of enquiry to press us at this day, upon the present state of the reformed churches, as it is most discernibly manifest, and what so visible a hazard and ruin (which without some marvellous appearance of the Lord, is like to fall under our hand in our age) doth now pressingly call for as duty.

Sc7. I. For the first, this sad view (though not without some greatest assurances from the word, to be ground of hope) about the state of the church, I shall in a few words offer,

1. That now is the time, when judgment seems to be begun at the house of God, and most remarkably marks at the green tree, when his church is now called to drink of that cup of chastisement and trial, before the dregs be wrung out to the adversary. A time beyond what our fathers have known, when the hand of the Lord is in a very immediate way heavy and sore upon his people, and his dispensations many ways corrective and judicial, more than comforting.

2. That it cannot be hid, how unanswerable our groaning, or any suitable weight of this, seems to be to such a stroke we are under; so that some sharp fever may be looked for, to prevent so visible a lethargy.

Whilst most seem to be pressed more about their personal ease and satisfaction under the rod, than to answer its design; to crouch under the burden more, than a being exercised about the present duty of the time; Oh! may not this be a

seen cause, why our own things press us so sore, that the care of the church and kingdom of Christ is this day become so light a burden?

3. We may now see such a remarkable crisis and struggling in the present state of the reformed churches, as of a woman in travail, in extreme between life and death, when all things seem to have this voice, "Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion;" and if some great assurances from the word of truth were not to rest on, Oh! what could be under our sight, which is not matter of grief and fear!

4. And is it not obvious, how all grounds, which in an ordinary way have been most hopeful and promising of the church's encouragement, have in a strange manner been broke and disappeared? And that gourd of the shadow and friendship of princes and great men so remarkably withered and gone, that we may know the church's interest and thriving leans on no human prop, nor her hope at this day, *either by might or by power, but by the spirit of the Lord*: But O here is enough for all, and I doubt not, that, in this blessed way he shall yet serve himself of such means for the service of this time, as that the less promising they are, the more convincing witness shall be thus of his being God, *who by things that are not, can confound the things that are, that no flesh may glory in his presence, but that he that glorieth, may glory in the Lord*.

5. Is there not at this day a most discernible sound and cry of judgment to be near, if we knew in earnest how to bring the written word and these times more near to other? For it must follow what Amos shewed, chap. iii. 8. *The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy*. Oh if we were but such a length to be under some dread and awe of these abounding spiritual plagues in this time, and what follows thereupon! Isa. vi. 11. *Until the cities be without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and a great forsaking be of the land, but yet in it shall be a tenth, &c.* which sad heavy words, I must say, had not a more affrighting aspect upon that people, than

wasted under spiritual judgments, than they seem to have on the visible church of Christ at this day, though a blessed recovery (how sharp soever the cure may be) we must not bring under debate.

6. That at this day there is such abounding Atheism, as lies in the bosom of a professed assent to the truth, is too visible for bringing it under debate, and one of the saddest plagues which hath almost overgone the reformed church; yea, which is the more dreadful, as it seems no less to be kept hid by most from themselves, than it is from others: But Oh! must we not give this such a name as Atheism, where these evidences hereof are so clear?

1. How easily many are more satisfied about the great concerns of religion, to take them upon report, without any further enquiry than they would be in the most common interest of this life.

2. How men are thus hesitant and unsure about an after and eternal state, whilst they know no possible way of being secured from this fear, which is of all undeniably the greatest, that an eternity of woe may be before them.

I confess, some way it is not strange, if any question, if there be such a thing as the power and truth of religion, and these marvellous experiences, the saints have hereof, because so few know what this means: For, if the generality of the world were blind, and knew not what a thing seeing is, it might probably cause them doubt if there were any such thing as light and colours that others did see, or if there were in truth such a thing as sight is.

But Oh how amazing is it, when the great things of God do with such seriousness offer themselves to trial, and call us with the furthest certainty of seeing, and not by report to know the same, how most yet live wholly strangers thereto!

3. And is it not rare such an exercise this day as any serious reflection on those truths, and import thereof, to which men find so easy to give an assent, or to bring this once near their thoughts, that, as religion and the power thereof cannot possibly be known but by experience, there is such a de-

monstration of it to be assuredly had, as that of a living man, whereby he knows that he lives and breathes? Oh at what a rate do now most professed Christians enjoy their peace and quiet, when the acceptable hour and season of making sure for another world is hastening so fast, without being once concerned to have serious godliness a personal business, and to know it on some assurance on their soul, who yet know, that to die, and pass that great step out of time into eternity, must ere long be their personal work, though men can but once die, without all possible re-acting of it again for ever!

4. Though there seemed never more cause for such a sad remark than now, which was in former times in the church, that either the Scripture must not be the word of God, or most then were not Christians, who professed themselves such; yet, how few can be seen, to be such a length in this day, as to bring themselves and their way into the Scripture, and before its judgment! But Oh! in a deplorable and desperate kind of peace, do keep at a distance with such clear and enforcing discoveries of the truth, who do not professedly oppose the same.

7. It may be too manifest this day, how much it is become a matter of wit and invention to be Christians, rather than of power and life; and to act handsomely such a part, as it were by rules of art, than a serious following of the truth in the simplicity thereof. This being now a time when the theory and notion of practical divinity hath been too much enlarged, and this in so different a mould and shape, as hath too visibly tended to its darkning, and to render it more perplexed and thorny; whence,

1. It may be seen, how such a length in the notion and form of knowledge, as swims most in the judgment, hath almost taken up the room in the applicatory part thereof, to have light brought near and home to the soul by a personal application, as though the great interests of religion were not more to live the truths thereof, than to know them. O how sad a snare is this like to be for helping many to perish

with the more quiet and security, the more they are inured in such an ordinary converse with the theory of godliness!

2. And may we not thus see a practical feeding and living on the known and greatest truths, which have a communication with the very vitals of religion, such as the doctrine of redemption, adoption, justification, and effectual calling, &c. is so rarely known this day in the church?

3. How little also is this work of a Christian followed about their affections, so as to be kept vigorous and warm in the matter of duty, which so much influenceth that dead and uncomfortable walk, and driving heavily in the ways of the Lord by a great part who are professors in this time?

8. I shall but further add, upon so sad a subject, how visibly almost every where is that great interest of the life and power of religion through most of the reformed churches spent and worn out, with that ancient love and tenderness in following the Lord, which was once in the first times of the reformation discernible, which seems now to have no proportion to that measure of light and knowledge we are under. Oh whither is this gone, even in those parts, where sometimes the word of the gospel did with such burning and shining light go forth, so as the very sight and remembrance of such times is like to wear out!

CHAP. IX.

HAVING given this short touch of some sad appearances of these times, and what seems most discernible in the present state of the church, when (if ever in any age) that call to the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 3. does now speak with greatest weight to the reformed churches, *to remember from whence they are fallen, and do their first works, lest the Lord come, and remove the candlestick.* And so sad a declining from the ancient power and life of religion, which once was, may have the form also taken away. And since this is a matter not only of a public concern for the life and being of the church, but what should lie so near to every one, with ref-

pect to their eternal state; yea, that it is undeniable, where the present hazard and ruin of the churches is now most discernible, there must a healing and recovery also be fought. I shall but in a few particulars speak to something of a present and pressing duty, which through the Lord's gracious concurrence, should be of singular use to promote this great interest of the power of religion.

Sec. 1. That this day, Christians' work in the duties and exercises of godliness, and the doctrine of the church about this, did lead more in, with some serious tendency to the gospel and to Jesus Christ there, the alone centre, whither the whole of truth and godliness must meet. Oh how sad and astonishing is this! And I must say, one of the most influencing visible causes of such an ebb and consumption, as is now so universal in the vital parts of Christianity, that this great study of practical religion, which is not conceivable but as it is evangelic, does not more closely keep betwixt these a moving unto Jesus Christ our blessed Head, as the last end, and alone pattern, to which it must be conformed; and its being derived from him, as its alone fountain: Yea, when so great a trade is about religion in the church; yet how little those seem to be known, or lie near in the practice of most.

1. That the Christian's stock is not in his own hand, but all the disbursements and out-givings to each of these must come through his most blessed hand, *in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and from whom we must receive grace for grace.* Oh! should it be strange, though these gracious influences of light and life are so much withheld in these times, as to that measure which hath been formerly known thereof, when so many are upon another scent than this blessed and straight way of the gospel, in rolling the strefs of their work and duties upon Jesus Christ by a continued trade, and use-making of him as our sanctification, and to improve his kingly power for that end.

2. That it is not more pressing upon us, to have that blessed sacrifice of Christ our passover, once offered for sin, to be continued as a strengthening feast, to live and feed upon,

1 Cor. v. 8. as we are there called to keep the feast, and thus know what it is to have the blood of atonement, by a clear warming and sensible application thereof, laid as the alone healing salve to a wounded spirit.

3. To have the whole of a Christian's trials and exercises thus airted and brought to the gospel, as the sure and alone way of their strength, that should let them know in another manner their joy break up, when under necessity, distress, reproach, and felt weakness in themselves, that the power of Christ might rest upon them, 2 Cor. xii. 4. To know more by practical light, not only these inestimable fruits and blessings of redemption by Christ; but what it is to have our love and delight carried forth toward his glorious person, and for embracing thus of himself, as altogether lovely. O this is the alone object, which beyond holiness, and all the promised advantages of his death and purchase, we should move most towards, to know an union with his person, and taking up our alone rest there in himself, where the Christian's choice and consent, with the furthest complacence and delight, in so inestimably great an offer, should terminate in him as their exceeding joy. O blessed and inexpressibly sweet truth! Were this more known by practical light in the power and efficacy thereof, that the Christian's claim and interest to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and all the blessings of the gospel does thus follow a marriage-union and propriety in his person, and our being betrothed indissolubly, in that nearest tie, and by an irrevocable consent unto Jesus Christ, as he stands to us in all his offices, and upon his own terms, what might be then hoped of another lustre and appearance upon professors of the truth in this age; and that some should not find it so easy to offer a thrust in such a manner to darken the doctrine of grace, and give the world such a scheme and mould of the gospel, as they do at this day? And it is sure, a more serious looking in upon this great mystery, should enforce some conviction with it, that it is another thing to be a Christian, than many professors now take it to be. I have known some, who had been a remarkable length beyond oth-

ers in following duties; and in light about these, yea, to the conviction of all that knew them, were in this judged only serious in their way; who after, by the gracious work of the Lord, were made to see the truth of conversion to be another thing, which they had been wholly strangers to, even when such a length in Christian duties, until once this marvellous light by the gospel shined in upon them, and therewith knew what it was to have their heart pulled in to Jesus Christ, by such a blessed drawing touch of his power, as did determine their closing with him in his way, and upon his own terms.

Sect. 2. It seems a pressing call to many in these times who own a profession of the truth, with such a doubtful and fluctuating assent thereto, what we may see, Rev. iii. 15. that they would be in earnest and exercise reason thereabout as to know their state, and how it is with them upon these great concerns of an immortal soul; so as either to quit an empty shew of godliness, or follow this in the power and truth thereof, since it is not conceivable upon clearest grounds, what possible hesitation should be betwixt these. That if the Lord be God, and the Scripture revealed in the Old and New Testament his undoubted word and counsel, by which the alone way of being eternally saved, is revealed unto men; it is then sure, that this must be their greatest interest to follow him, and own his truth with all their heart, and with all their strength: But, if not, and that they are not persuaded upon their soul hereof, there must needs be a being positive, and determined here, without the furthest contradiction to reason. Now, for enforcing some conviction hereof, if through the blessing of the Lord this might have weight on the conscience of any, I shall offer these to be considered,

1. That it is a thing so unanswerable, why men be not either seriously godly, or real Atheists, either to quit duty, or what herein their hand findeth, to do it with all their might, since it is upon no less than an eternal interest, and the season now so quickly hasteneth away for any possible access to such a trial.

2. What if upon the very supposal and report hereof, that this account given by the whole race of the saints since the beginning, of these marvellous things of religion, in the power and reality thereof, be assuredly true: And this blessed way, which they see others to be serious in, be the alone way to a blessedness for ever; then in what a dreadful case are they, or can they think to meet with such, and enjoy one state together in another world, whose way and principles have been in such a real opposition to other stated here. Oh! what an astonishing peace is this, and which most at this day entertain, when it is under some shew and profession to be Christians?

3. How is it possible, to shut their eyes at these enforcing evidences of the power and life of religion, to be an undoubted certainty, and known to others by experience, though they were never acquainted therewith themselves; when it is sure, they must see in the life and practice of such, some visible transcript of what is also expressly witnessed in the Scripture thereof; nor can they debate such to be highly rational, as much as in any other things; yea, to justify them in their conscience of being serious in what they own? And must it not be some other fight these have about this, than they yet have ever understood?

4. It seems a strange contradiction to reason, if they would but once reflect upon this, what ground of prejudice and casting of reproach on that way is there, which they never yet knew upon trial, whilst they see this doth not flee the light, or their exactest search and enquiry, but that the cause most visibly is an inbred enmity and aversion at the power and truth of godliness, for which they yet know not how to give a reason.

5. How they came such a length in the form and external duties of godliness, when they suffer so much hereby, as a sad and bitter yoke to the flesh, and know no solid gain and income this way, whilst duty in the power and spiritual exercise thereof is so sweet and easy; yea, such inexpressible delights found, when it is seriously followed. Oh! what a

fore part is religion in the practice, if it be not on men's heart! Or what comfort is there to come so near in a being almost Christians, and yet perish in the close? to hazard some little, but with such a reserve, as yet to adventure all for Jesus Christ, if they should be called thereto, and upon each hand be so sad losers?

6. To admit the truth and authority of the Scripture with so visible a latitude, as is by many this day owned in their way, may seem indeed strange, and what a lax conception and mould of religion these frame to themselves, as tends to lay aside that fear, tenderness, and serious work of the things of God, which the word so pressingly enforceth, as if men's real interest thus, were how to perish without fear and dread!

7. It is a strange length most in these times come, in a concurrence with others in the public duties of religion, when they know so little any pressure upon their spirit, what should be their work alone, in the retired duties of a Christian, which are unquestionably the most substantial and weighty part of duty; and can religion be there in truth, (whatever name these have to live) where its more secret work under the ground keeps no proportion to that which is public in the view of others.

8. That now, when there is so much discernibly to imbit-ter the world to them, and their outward comforts do so rarely answer to the fore labour, toil and griefs, which are here.

Oh! how is it, so few are found on this blessed scent and enquiry, to know the power and truth of godliness, and what a sure and inexpressible relief is there for every state and condition; in delighting their soul in God, and a near and feeling converse with the great truths of the gospel, which are to most known but by report only; so as they might once know upon trial what thus it is to have the desires of their hearts answered.

SECT. 3. Since this is of great weight, and that it is sure, the alone frame and mould of practical religion is with such express plainness shewed us in the Scripture, as none needs

be in the dark, without shutting their eyes; yea, I must say, if these signs and characters given of the reality of godliness were seriously pondered, there was never an age wherein more professors are like to come short of heaven, and be found in a dreadful delusion about their state than now; and so much the more affrighting, as so little access seems this day for many being convinced, through that length they have come in a form, the truth whereof is so great a mystery: Yea, never was a time of such light, when the thoughts of these great truths of heaven and hell, and for being eternally saved, seem to have had so little weight on men's souls. Oh! that serious work and exercise, which was so known in former times of the church, for working out their salvation with fear and trembling, seems almost gone in a throng of other things. It is true, there are remarkably different sizes and degrees among the saints, and the infancy of some, as well as the further age of others, must be considered: But since it is like a peculiar stroke upon most, that they will not once come near to the light, and be tried by that infallible rule; I judge it duty, whether they will hear or forbear, to offer some Scripture truths that lie so near to the very state and being of a Christian; that, if ever I knew any thing of the way of the Lord, I must profess I know not how any can be strangers thereto, and to some near and feeling converse therewith in experience, without being strangers to the very essentials of Christianity, or can have any comfortable evidence, that they shall live that life of glory, who have not thus known by practical light, what it is to live the life of grace here.

1. That such as have passed the new birth, must know a spiritual and new life, with which they were not born, and is from no natural causes, but formed and wrought within by the Spirit, whereof there is as certain and undeniable a demonstration, as they are sure that they breathe, and have a natural life, a life that hath its peculiar operation and vital acts put forth in its breathings, delights and desires, in a near converse with the Lord, as truly as any acts of this na-

tural life, with these sensible languishings and over-clouding thereof, as well as enjoyments and pleasures, proper to its own nature, as the influences and breathings of the Spirit of the Lord are let forth, or restrained. It is sure nothing can be more expressly shewed, than this from the whole of the Scripture, and how it follows on an union with *Jesus Christ*, in whom it is hid, Col. iii. 3. and a living in him, Gal. ii. 20. to dwell in him, Eph. iii. 17. to be quickened in him, Eph. ii. 5. yea to be nourished and increased in him, Col. ii. 19. and is not this a serious business for trial, what is the seal to the truth thereof from experience.

2. That a spiritual evidence and discovery of divine truth, which differs not in degree, but in kind, is now known to them, as is clear, 1 Cor. ii. 14. whence the truths of the word are sometimes set home on the soul with that light and power, which is inexpressible to others; and though it be a knowing the same truths, yet in another manner than before; when by the *spirit they know the things that are freely given us of God*, which no report could ever have made them believe, until by grace they were taken out of that dreadful gulph of the darkness of nature, into that marvellous light revealed in the gospel, which then caused such a change betwixt them, and what they once were.

3. "That the peace of God, which passeth natural understanding, and preserves the heart and mind through *Jesus Christ*," is not to be kept without a continued war and wrestling, and that as they have two parties within stated in most vigorous opposition to other; so the more spiritual duty is, and the more closely the law is pressed in its spiritual extent, the further aversion hath the carnal heart thereto, which is not more clearly shewed, Rom. vii. 22, 23. than their experience can witness.

4. That this truth of the kingdom of *Jesus Christ* is to be known on the soul, as well as his visible kingdom over the church, which consisteth in *righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. xiv. 17. but such as cannot be possibly known or understood, but by a practical and feeling light

thereof; *And in his working all our works in us*; whence such sensible liberty at one time more than another, and confidence in our approach to God after saddest bondage and fear, so sweet a calm, and sun-shine, when the storm is most sharp without, and a being carried through these difficulties with such advantage, which at another time, and in another frame, they would have fainted at.

5. That a new acquaintance, and some other society than that of men, and a real fellowship and converse with God both in secret and more public duties, is assuredly true, so as they have been never less alone, with more solid joy than in the retirements of a Christian: now, as the whole of the Scripture bears such a witness hereto, as there needs no clearing thereof; 'O what a testimony have the saints also to give! And where this is taken upon report, can it be, that religion hath ever been a matter of power and reality to such? I thought it a choice word from a grave and exercised Christian in the ways of God, that being frequently and much alone in the exercise of prayer, to some that thought strange thereat, said, "He could not part with his duty, until he found the Lord, and when he found him, it was so sweet, as made it not easy to go forth to the world."

Yea, that also of another famous Christian of our nation, who had so oft known an immediate strength and support under greatest pressures sealed in this way of retired fellowship with God; "with him the most of moths is less than nothing, but without him I find the least of leasts to be more than my burthen."

6. It is surely conjoined with the being and state of a Christian, to know in experience a power with the word and ordinances of the gospel, above the most persuasive words of a man, or any moral influence; yea, with that different manifestation, both as to light and power at one time, as they can no more have at their choice at other times, than to have the sun shine upon the earth when under a dark cloud: and thus must know something of that, Luke xxiv. *The burning of their heart within, when the Scripture hath been opened, that the*

kingdom of God is not in word, but in power, 1 Cor. iv. 20. Yea, what an evidence and demonstration of the Spirit is with the gospel, 1 Cor. ii. 6.

7. That such great things are undoubted realities, as the seal and earnest of the Spirit of promise, the comforts of the Holy Ghost, Eph. i. 13. which in some measure must be known here to each of the saints; the sensible intimation of pardon on their soul; after contrition and brokenness of heart, that voice of joy and gladness, than which no audible voice was ever more certainly known, than this hath been on their soul; the immediate presence of the comforter, and truths brought in so seasonably in a day and hour of strait, as hath brought inexpressible ease and refreshment therewith.

8. It is sure, this truth also lies so near the state and being of a Christian, as there must be some practical knowledge of it, who ever knew the work of God on their own soul, that there is access and liberty for pouring out the heart in prayer, and a being determined to approach unto the Lord with a sensible power from himself; the felt taste of his acceptance of them in their suit, and being admitted to see his face with joy; yea, is thus made as discernible, as it is insured, Phil. iv. 5. Psal. xix. 15. as on the other hand, upon some wearing out and restraint in this blessed exercise, the sensible abatement of that spiritual life, and vigour they formerly knew in the ways of God, so as to find these duties both burdensome and disrelishing, in which they formerly have known such delight, and how that truth, Matth. xxvi. 41. doth then enforce a witness thereto, that *watching and prayer* is the tried means to keep any from falling into temptation.

9. That as there are inexpressible delights in holiness, yea, such a reality as *the joy and peace in believing*, which they certainly know: so also a discernible quenching of the Spirit by adventuring on any known sin; and when they would not read their bosom-distempers from the word, they have been enforced oft to look in again upon them by some sharp and

visible check from the Lord, and know the truth of that, 1 Thess. v. 19. Psalm lxxxi. xi. 12.

10. That sensible influences of strength from the Lord, and his gracious concurrence, which waits on commanded duty, assuredly are not only as to the frame of their spirits, but as to the exercise of their gifts, and how without him, who is our strength, we can do nothing; I should think it a strange thing, how a Christian can be in earnest with his work, and a stranger to this.

11. Lastly, that it is sure the *fruit of righteousness is sown in peace*, and how at no time doth tenderness and straightness in men's walk, want some inward taste and seal of its acceptance with the Lord; when it is no less discernible, such a withdrawing thereof upon some wrong step and turning aside in his way, as discouragement and darkness doth sensibly meet, than to let them know, that it is surely *a bitter and evil thing to depart from the Lord*.

SecT. 4. This duty in these sad and winnowing times we are fallen in, should lie near us, with respect to the public interest of the church; as well as to our own personal case, to guard against prejudices at the way of the Lord, which on these grounds I would press.

1. That such a remarkable wo is denounced in the Scripture, not only against those by *whom offences come*, but *to the world because of offences*, this being one of the saddest strokes from the Lord, when a disposition and tendency to stumble, hath judicially a stumbling block laid in their way.

2. As under that predominant humour of the jaundice, the colour is suitably represented to the eye; it is strange to think what a judgment an evil eye doth pass on the spotless ways of the Lord; yea, with what satisfaction an impoisoned nature doth seek to strengthen itself.

3. It is sure, the truth suffers not more from open opposition, than oft it does by these hid reflections, and subtle conveyances of reproach from many in these times.

4. It hath not been known since that blessed reformation of the church from Popery, that where in any of the

churches the Lord hath some special work on foot, and the interest of the gospel gaining ground, but Satan there hath followed the same remarkably, with some such close and subtle assault, in bringing forth something of his work in resemblance thereto, to beget prejudice against the way of truth. It was unquestionably one of the most searching trials the German church had, by that strange appearance of the Anabaptists there. But this being so notour and public in the histories of these late times, besides other remarkable instances of the like kind, I forbear to mention it further.

One memorable passage that is less known to many, may be, for some advantage and confirming to the truth, inserted here.

When the gospel was flourishing in the church of Ireland by the ministry of some eminent servants of Christ, who were labouring there some years before the rebellion, and a most extraordinary time of the power of the Spirit following the ordinances, when others of Satan's devices, to cast a lett in the way, had proved abortive, this great destroyer was at last let loose in a strange manner, to essay a counterfeit of the work of the Lord there, which was then so effectual to the conversion of many.

This first began about Lochlearn upon several ignorant persons, who in the midst of the public worship fell a breathing and panting as these who had run long, with strange pangs like convulsions, yea, thus were affected, whatever purpose was preached, even by such ministers who were known enemies to the truth, the number of which still increased through several parishes for a time. At first, both ministers and Christians there were put to a stand; but after, upon further discovery of the tendency of their way, and finding no solid convincing work, which had therewith any sense of sin, or panting after a Saviour, did quickly perceive this to be one of the depths of Satan, and his design to slander and disgrace the work of the Lord, so as after some grave ministers who were then there, when they began in that manner to appear in public, did with great authority rebuke that lying spirit in

their master's name; yea, it was evident, how such did after continue rude, profane and ignorant. Through this engine did the Devil thus drive to beget prejudices amongst those who did but look on at a distance, against the power and life of religion.

Sect. 5. What a blessed and effectual mean should this be, to promote serioufness, and against such sad and spreading formality of these times, the churches are so much now wasted under, *To have more deep and frequent thoughts on that great subject of death*, about which there is no debate amongst us, yet it is strange to consider in what manner it is kept at a distance with most of the generation. O what an enforcement should this bring with it, to follow godliness, not in a form, but in the power and truth thereof! If such, who have profited so little under the ordinances of the gospel, would but sit sometimes alone, and hear this grave preacher speak to them, and bring these things near to their thoughts.

1. That strange way and passage they are assuredly to go through, which was never known to them before, but must once pass it, betwixt time and eternity, and what this will be, when they are entring on that dark and unknown ground; "Whilst the keepers of the house shall tremble, and these that look out at the windows are darkened, because man goeth to his long home."

This is a grave and serious work, if men could find such time, amidst the throng of other things, to advise how they adventure, and on what terms into another world.

2. How near this great change is, without a possibility to have one hour insured beyond the present hour of life, so as each night we lie down, not knowing but our breath may be stopt with some sudden arrest of death before the morning, which might put us off to think, without a strange and desperate security; *How will death now meet us at this hour?* I thought it a great word of a choice and serious Christian a few years ago, when he was called to suffer for the truth, and was sentenced to die, said before his judges, "I bless

the Lord, that these seven years past, death could not have come wrong to me, not one day."

3. What serious thoughts should this cause, in one moment to admit of so great a change, and in the very instant of the soul's parting with the body a present entering into that after-state, which shall put the Christian once and for ever, yea, in one moment, in the fulness of inconceivable joy, in the immediate embracements of Jesus Christ, the society of the blessed angels, and church-triumphant, and what a sight shall that be, which no thoughts or words, can possibly reach, when with the shutting of these eyes here; they are then opened in the paradise of God, and know the state which is there, *and what is the inheritance of the saints in light.*

4. What a change this must be to such, who in one moment shall part with their heaven, and find a real hell; *for the men of this world, whose portion is here,* to be pulled from all the delights and pleasures they once had, to take up their lodging in these dark and horrid prisons which are in the pit; and then know this to be sad earnest, of which they made so small account while they were upon earth.

Oh! will nothing bring near the doctrine of hell, and eternal damnation to most of this generation, until they know it upon trial, when these gates shall be everlastingly shut; never to admit an opening.

5. To consider what thoughts and reflection most men in eternity have of their former state and condition. And what will the remembrance of a lifetime here in the fulness of outward comforts amount to, which are gone, never to return more.

Yea, in that hour, when the great men of this earth, are turned out of all their possessions, and their soul taken from them by that dreadful pull of grim death, not by a rendering and comitment thereof to Jesus Christ, which his people only knows; *then whose shall all these possessions be?* O! but that must be an heavy and fore pull for an unmortified man to die and leave the world, whilst his heart is still alive to it.

6. What another account, upon the approach of this blessed change, will the Christians then have of their most bittering crosses, which through grace have tended both to trial and furthering of their faith and love; and some solid fruit for the Lord, beyond these, who once had the greatest delights and pleasures here, when they are past and gone?

7. Is it not near, when many shall question, whether their life was real, or a dream, whilst each day and hour, as it is hastening over some part of the world's comforts, putteth by also some of the Christian's crosses and griefs; that whilst his work lies most to make some gainful improvement thereof; he knows also now, *this sad and searching trouble, and I shall never meet again*, though the fruit thereof goes before, and shall meet him in that blessed state which is above.

8. To consider also that sweet and sound sleep the bodies of the saints shall have for a time in the grave, which is the bed of their rest; yea, how indissolubly there, is their dust still united with their blessed head, and within a little, how ravishing shall their wakening be!

It was a sweet thought to that excellent servant of Christ, Mr. Rollock, when he stretched forth his hand on his death-bed, with a serious looking thereon, and said: *Yea even this hand shall once shine in glory*. It is sure, the earth now could not be capable of the least of the saints, who are entered into a glorified state, so inconceivably great is that distance betwixt that condition where now they are, and the highest state of a Christian here in this lower world.

Seet. 6. This weighty duty I must touch a little here, to watch and guard against that dreadful hazard and wasting plague, which hath had so visible a tendency, almost to ruin the interest of the churches of Christ this day, of *love and eager pursuit after the world*. It is remarkable with what further light this is enforced under the New Testament than under the old, both as to the hazard which followeth thereon, and that reckoning the saints must make with the *strait and narrow way, and much tribulation to enter into glory*. Present things lie near the senses, and have oft that force, as

most will not cease to follow the bait, even when that destroying hook, of the hazard of losing their immortal soul, is so discernible; yea, how loath many in this age are to come near to Scripture-light hereabout: But Oh! it is undeniable how much this hath tended to a wearing out of the power, and spirituality of religion with that life and tendernefs that did formerly appear in the church, when to quit all for Jesus Christ and his truth, was with such joy and delight then reckoned upon in these times of persecution, yea, their serious and earnest pursuing after the substance, and reality of godliness, was no less discernible, than now this eager tendency, and grasping after that shadow of the world, by most who profess the truth. But though the public concerns of the kingdom of Christ should not have weight with some; yet, if men cease not to exercise reason, and be under any awe and dread of the Scripture, yea have not concluded their hope in this life only, this subject I am sure, may enforce some serious thoughts on them. I confess, I must say, upon any light from the Scripture, with the too manifest discovery of that eager scent most seem to be upon in this age, how to be rich, and have great things in the world, it hath put me to a stand; not but it is an unquestionable duty for Christians in their several callings, to be seriously concerned therein, *and not slothful in business*; and that such are, and have been in all times, who have got their spirits more dead, and subdued to the world amidst the greatest enjoyments thereof, than many of a low and mean estate; yea, that there are, I hope, not a few, whose interest here tend to some further service for the Lord, in consecrating the gain thereof to him; but this is an attainment indissolubly linked, not with the truth and reality of grace only, but much of the power and vigorous exercise thereof, and needs more than ordinary watching with prayer against that hazard they are in. But, upon the other hand, it seems strange, that Scripture-truths so plain, pungent and weighty (if men do truly believe and credit the testimony of God therein) should not cause more fears and tremblings of heart on most of the generation; yea, on

many, who I hope want not some serious respect to the better part, when these are brought near and seriously pondered;

1. That it is so expressly told us by the Lord, Matth. xix. 23, 24. "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again, I say unto you, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And the very same set down by the evangelist, Luke xviii. 24, 25. And though our blessed master expounds his own words there, and that these are not inconsistent, even for such as are rich to be saved, since *nothing is impossible to God*; Yet does it most clearly shew, these are rare, and great instances of an infinite power; yea, that the world and a large share thereof, is such a let in the way as we may see it something extraordinary, with such a load of the earth for any to get through the strait and narrow gate, which is indeed as the *needle eye*, without subduedness and mortification.

2. We see a dreadful woe denounced against such, Luke vi. 24. *Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation*; and how these torments of the rich man shewed, Luke xvi. 19. are conjoined by Christ himself there, though in a parable, with a having *received his good things here in this life*: And though he graciously allows his people the comfortable use and enjoying of their outward lot; though the convey of these true and greatest comforts; which are spiritual, is oft in the way of the cross; yet is that sad mark by the Holy Ghost put upon others, James v. 5. *They have lived in pleasures, and nourished themselves as in a day of slaughter*; That it seems matter of astonishment, how men live under any awful regard of the Scripture, if a large interest in the earth be not some cause of fear and dread.

3. And is not men's eager love and desires after the world a Scripture sign and mark of a reprobate state? *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world the love of the father is not in him*, 1 John ii. 15. And that sad note put on the covetous man, Psal. x. 3. *That he is the man whom the Lord hateth*. Yet, Oh how rare

a fight is riches this day, without love, immoderate desires, and a setting of the heart thereon.

4. That such eager desires, when men *will be rich*, is so expressly shewed in the Scripture to be the very scent and path that leads down to death, *and a being drowned in eternal perdition*, 1 Tim. vi. 9. and the cause thereof held forth, that native tendency this hath to *a falling into many foolish and hurtful lusts*.

And, is not *the carnal mind enmity to God*? Yea, every length and advantage this gains, so much further do men stand in a direct contrariety and opposition to God.

5. Though such do bless themselves in their heart, and are looked on with envy by others; what a dreadful mark doth the Holy Ghost put on these, with a call unto all others to consider the same, *Whose eyes stand out with fatness, and have more than heart can wish, and are not in trouble as others; Lo, these are the ungodly that prosper in the world!* Psal. lxxiii. 11, 12. yea, are thus set apart with that sad designation, "That they are men of this world, whose portion is in this life; they are full of substance, &c." Psal. xvii. 14. Oh is it not cause of fear, that where the world hath got men's hearts, it is a sad evidence they have got it for their portion!

6. Where riches are given, is it not upon trial, yea, one of the greatest, which men can have, to keep them under some weight and exercise, more than the most searching crosses? since it is clear, the more interest any thus have, it adds so much to their talent, which is not theirs, but committed under trust, of which every one must be accountable according to their measure, Matth. xxv. 15. Luke xix. 15. and will ere long hear that awful call, *Come, give an account of your stewardship*, Luke xvi. 2. which will be found another thing, as to a faithful improvement of that measure, than seems by most to be either believed or laid to heart.

7. And is there any other way leads us unto life, than the strait and narrow way? Yea, nothing more dangerous than to be entangled with riches, honour or pleasures; it is utterly impossible to serve God and mammon.

And is it not one of the most difficult steps of a Christian, and rarest victories he gets, 1 John ii. 10. *This is your victory whereby you have overcome the world?* When the native tendency thereof is so discernibly to take the heart off God, and favouring spiritual delights; to pull downward, and make a sensible interposition betwixt heaven and the soul; to get betwixt us and the better part, yea, to deprive men of that blessedness in another world.

8. Besides such express testimonies of the Scripture, which are so full, clear, and peremptory, as all may see what a beacon the Holy Ghost hath put on this rock in a special way; Can any thing be more visible through the various changes of this life, how men's interests in the world tend to load more than to satisfy, and yieldeth least when it is most pressed; how rare these are, who are not in some measure discontent with their lot, and find the best of outward things in their hand are not that which they seemed to be at a distance? Yea, what can the furthest delights of riches amount to, beyond the present time, where no comfortable reckoning can be on what is gone? For we are truly dead to what of our life is here past; and no possible security for one day or hour of what is to come.

Scet. 7. It is undeniable, how much the recovery of the life and power of religion lieth this day at the door of the ministry of the church, as a special subservient mean thereto, and what near and undoubted connexion this in all times hath with the thriving of the gospel in any particular church. I know, there wants not a horrid party in this time, whose work is to decry and cast reproach on that excellent office and appointment of Jesus Christ, which he hath given as a perpetual standing ordinance for his church to the end of time: But it is not ministers, but their great Master, whose they are, and *holdeth the stars in his right-hand*, against whom they appear herein.

And though there want not such in all times, yea, remarkably at this day, than whom none do more obstruct the interest of the gospel, and counteract the very end of this great

office, in a sad opposition of themselves to the truth and power of godliness; and wound, instead of healing, yea, handle the word of the Lord deceitfully, by accommodating it to their private interest and design in a corrupt application thereof, which is not more sad than we may find foretold, and the church expressly forewarned in the word, of such: Yet I judge this comes not under debate, with all who own the truth. That there are, I desire to hope, not a few ministers and watchmen in the church of Christ, whose greatest aim and study is, to be found faithful to their Master's interest, and have a weight of that work on them, without respect to any outward encouragement; yea, that such are in truth, and not in a shew, "Ministers of the New Testament, of the Spirit, and not of the letter."

O what a promising evidence and door of hope were this to the present time, or any particular church, when such a ministry is given of the Lord of whom that account can be given!

1. That they discern the times, so as to be deeply affected with the appearances of judgment.

2. Who live much under another weight than the discharge of ministerial duties, or following that which is public before men, in some serious exercise of spirit about their own personal case; otherwise, how sad and heavy were it to be inured with practical truths, without a near and feeling converse therewith upon their own soul; And, as it is a great thing for a minister to be faved; so, to be pressed in the trial of conversion, and the work of sanctification on his own spirit, no less than in pressing it on others; yea, *with fear and trembling to work out their salvation*, who thus stand accountable upon so great a trust committed to them.

3. That their great scope in preaching is still to lead in to the gospel, and to have all their doctrine, and holding forth of duties thus pointing, with a clear tendency to Jesus Christ, and for an airthing the hearers to him.

4. Such whose pressure and continued exercise on their spirit is, how their ministry may tend to their Master's praise

and exalting, whatever entertainment they should meet with from men. And it is sure, there is a shining in humility, with a much more convincing lustre than in gifts; yea, it is ever seen, that the humblest preachers have been most instrumental to convert others, and not the most eloquent or polished, who never knew brokenness of heart, and some weight of their own inward case.

5. Such who are kept with much serious dependence on the Lord in their duties. It was the saying of a choice minister of Christ, "that he never came off with less comfort, and more discontent with himself, than when to appearance he was best provided: Not because of his diligence for being thus prepared, since that was his duty; but because he was then most apt to neglect dependence on the Lord."

6. Whose great and most weighty part in the ministry is to live religion, more than how to discourse thereof; to whom preaching is not the heaviest part of their work, nor a going about duty upon the matter, as to have their principle herein right: For that only abides, which is done for the Lord, and will have a true income of solid peace and joy. Such is the impression on the wax as it is on the seal; and it is sure, where that holy fear and love to Jesus Christ hath a deep engraving on our heart, it will make a suitable impression on our duties.

7. I must add that, which hath so near and close a connexion with the fruit and success of the ministry in all times, a serious study to have this followed in secret prayer, and wrestling before the Lord, no less than in public appearances; when it is so undeniable,

1. To be a fruitful and lively minister, can be no more than what the Lord does make him hourly to be, and needs a new influence of the blessing for every new piece of his work.

2. That it is not the furthest advantage of gifts or the most polished discourse, but the Spirit of the Lord, that makes this great service for the church successful; yea, that

it must be another key than moral suasion can open the heart of the hearers.

3. That a lively frame, and to have their work prepared within, by some serious impressions of the truth on their own spirit, is found one of the most sensible advantages, both to himself and others, that a minister goes forth with in any public appearance: Not but that a serious studying of what is to be delivered in the matters of God, is a necessary duty; But, O what a promising token should it be for better times to the church, and some recovery of the wonted life and power of religion, which was formerly so discernible; when the public work of preaching is thus carried on with much of that preparatory work of secret prayer, the want whereof makes oft such weak preaching even with the most visible advantage of gifts and human eloquence! And I must here add, how this weighty duty lies upon the hearers of the gospel, as well as ministers, who have any respect to the kingdom of Christ, to help forward the public work by secret prayer; whence such advantage of an open door for the word is found in some places more than in others, where there is a serious people to entertain it, and hath the public work, as well as their private case, much on their heart.

See. 8. In so remarkable an hour of trial now on the church, what a blessed and hopeful mean might this be, to see a more "near correspondence, and unite concurrence" about the work of the Lord; not only among Christians "themselves, but particular churches;" with some serious enquiry and search, what may be the provoking cause of this sad over-clouding darkness, now over the reformed churches, after such manifestations of the power and brightness of the gospel to our fathers! Oh, how sad a want is this in time of so eminent hazard! that almost there is none found to stand in the breach, but every one's hand on his loins, and no stirring or essay for some unite striving together, and contending for the truth once delivered to the saints; which is so great a trust on the present generation, not for themselves only, but posterity, when so fore a ruin is like to fall under our hand.

I confess, it may seem hopeless to mention such a duty, when these impressions, as sometimes have been of this, are discernibly off the spirits of most: But I am sure these pressing arguments may be undeniable to enforce some conviction.

1. That the want of a public spirit hath put the most endeared interests of many to be as a butt of the holy indignation of the Lord, and is the seen cause, why many sow much, and bring in little; with such sad personal grievances and complaints every where, even among the professors of the truth, Hag. i. 9. *Why? saith the Lord of hosts: Because of my house, which is waste and desolate, and every man runs to his own house.*

2. It is known, how singular a blessing hath followed some very hopeless essays and endeavours of a few, in behalf of the truth, when there has been a falling in, upon the right lish of present duty, to keep it alive in a remarkable hour of defection; yea, to effects above rational belief: And what surprising issue the improving a little strength, with forest wrestlings hath oft had, for the service of the church and generation.

3. Is it not now clear, what a remarkable appearance is against the truth; how the enemy is like to break in as a flood, and the assault, not from a private adversary, but from a public, unite, and formidable combination this day from the Romish party? And Oh! are we fallen into such a dead lethargy, not to be awakened to some more unite concurrence, upon that great interest of the truth, to know the condition we are in, for mutual sympathy and upstirring to the duties of the time, for communication of counsels, and promoting further openness of heart among such, with whom the things of Christ have any weight.

4. We see in these suffering, and truly flourishing times after the reformation, with what seriousness and advantage it was followed for mutual intercourse, and being concerned in the public case and concerns of the church and Christians amongst themselves. What a grave enquiry was then, what tenderness and sympathy amongst the followers of the Lord,

when they knew but at a distance the suffering lot of their friends? Yea, with what desire and longings to know the success of the gospel, and what further interest it did gain any where? But Oh! now most seem to be only minding their own things, and how to secure a private interest, to whom these words may have a sad and dreadful sound, Esther iv. 13, 14. *Think not with thyself, that thou shalt escape more than all the Jews: For if thou holdest altogether thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.* Some may have an advantage and opportunity for improvement of themselves beyond others, in behalf of the bleeding interests of the church; and I have confidence to say, That any such serious aim, once followed, shall be the way both of their strength and encouragement; and to know that an enlarged heart for the interest of Christ will never want a large allowance.

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THE
TRUTH & CERTAINTY
OF THE
PROTESTANT FAITH:

WITH A SHORT AND PLAIN ACCOUNT
OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE
ROMISH CHURCH,
*IN ITS VISIBLE OPPOSITION TO SCRIPTURE, & THE
VERY BEING OF CHRISTIANITY.*

To which is adjoined,
SOME SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT POPERY, AND
THE STATE OF THAT CONTROVERSY.

By **ROBERT FLEMING,**
LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT CAMBUSLANG.

And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. 1 Pet. iii. 15.

If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his fore-head or in his hand; the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.

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1801.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

READER,

THESE few sheets adjoined here, against Popery, were in part formerly published; but being with further enlargement now reprinted, I hope it may not be found unsuitable to set them down here in the close, when so convincing and necessary a rise from the foregoing subject is clear.

These grounds did in some measure press me now to the present publishing thereof;

1. That the import of this controversy betwixt the Romish and Reformed church, concerns the meanest this day, no less than the more knowing and learned: and that to be a Protestant in earnest must necessarily require a seeing the truth with their own eyes, yea, such a faith, as is the result of a judgment upon diligent search, convinced by the Scripture.

2. That it is an hour of great trial, and of the power of darkness, when the Popish adversary is so visibly at work, almost every where, to sow tares, whilst so few, even of these who seem serious in professing the truth, can give a clear account of the grossness of Popery, and solid grounds of the Protestant doctrine, when thus assaulted; but lie naked thereto, as without defence, though abounding and clearest light hath been held forth for that end; and at a sad disadvantage to hold fast their profession by suffering, if they should be called thereto as in former times.

3. The visible hazard of many young ones in this generation to be made a prey of, and easily poisoned with Popery;

who but seldom work out in their age and riper years, what they thus drink in, in their youth.

4. That such an essay seemed convincingly needful for these whose age, want of time, indisposition to read, or loathsomeness to be at expence in buying books, is too visible a let for their improving what hath been more largely written by others.

5. That (as I hope it shall be found) what is of greatest weight or necessary use to be known in these controversies is here comprised, though in small bounds; yet with such plainness, that the meanest reader may understand and know the doctrine and principles of Popery, and what arguments they pretend to be most strong, held forth in the questions here proposed; with a clear view of their direct opposition to the Scripture, by the answers thereto; To as, in a very few hours these for whom this is most designed, may, by reading it but sometimes over, have it so far impressed on them, as to know how to answer, and give a solid account of the Protestant doctrine, and grossness of Popery, when assaulted by any seducers. If to any such this small essay might be of use, I may then say, the author hath not lost his desire and aim, whatever entertainment it should otherwise meet with. The time hasteneth, when that only, which tendeth to a solid peace with Jesus Christ, will abide, and lie near to the soul, when the testimony of men will be of small value.

I shall but add, that nothing is here charged on the Romish adversaries, as their principles, which their own greatest writers of the doctrine of the council of Trent do not clearly attest. The reader would consider, that these sections, into which this is divided, are with respect to the particular heads of the Romish doctrine; which are there handled.

THE
TRUTH & CERTAINTY
OF THE
PROTESTANT FAITH:

SECTION I.

Quest. "SEEING our greatest interest is to know the truth and certainty of that religion we profess, what is to be understood by the Protestant reformed religion; as under such a designation it is now held forth?"

Ans. The Scripture, unto whose trial this offereth itself, clearly sheweth, that it is no new doctrine brought in on the world, but the truth of Christianity, by the good hand of the Lord on the reformed church, confessed, asserted and purged from the corruptions of Popery; and hath the very same grounds, to prove it, which the Christian religion hath.

Quest. "Is it not of late, the name of Protestant, much less as a church, was known, and from visible appearances but little, to evidence its being and succession in the world, when Popery for many ages had a conspicuous and flourishing state?"

Ans. We deny not the reformation to be late, and that name of Protestant, which hath its rise from a solemn protestation of several princes and cities against Popery; but these also are demonstrably clear.

1. How it is the same truth and religion of the apostles and primitive church, wherein they walked, though, in a great measure, after darkened, as Antichristianism grew up; which hath been unanswerably proved to the world.

2. That in the Scripture no ground can be shewed for a continual visibility of the church, as an unite body, and in a flourishing outward state; but the contrary is foretold, how obscure and low her condition should be during Antichrist's reign: So as a *place of hiding was then prepared for her*, Rev. xii. 6, 3. Yet even in the darkeſt times, there did not want ſome visibility of the true church, by a continued ſucceſſion of witneſſes to appear for the truth, and againſt the Romiſh apoſtaſy, which, as a freſh river, made its way through that horrid lake without mixing with it.

Queſt. "What peculiar grounds are to prove this, or enforce a conviction on others, That the Proteſtant religion this day is the pure and ancient Chriſtian religion?"

Anſ. If men ſhut not their eyes, none can deny theſe grounds as a teſt of the certainty thereof; 1. Its exact conformity to the Scripture, and to the genuine and perſpicuous ſenſe thereof; than which nothing is more clear, if we will but compare theſe together. 2. That the Proteſtant religion, in all the eſſentials thereof, is the very ſame, and exactly agrees with the faith of the Chriſtian church in the firſt three centuries; and for this we appeal our adverſaries to produce one eſſential difference betwixt the one and the other from the records of thoſe times, or any writings of the fathers. 3. That no evidence can be given in contending for the Chriſtian faith againſt Heathens, and to hold forth the certainty thereof, which doth not undeniably answer to confirm the Proteſtant religion. 4. That in the writings of the greateſt adverſaries and their bitter invectives againſt Chriſtianity, who in the firſt times did oppoſe themſelves to the ſame doctrine the Proteſtant church now owns, and profeſſeth; ſuch as *Celfus, Tryphon, Porphyry, Lucian, &c.* There is not the leaſt mention of Popery in any of theſe articles againſt Romiſh ſupremacy and infallibility, where they could have had ſo great advantage to object againſt the Chriſtian cauſe, and call its truth in queſtion: Nor did the Jews, who objected all they could againſt the Chriſtian faith, in the leaſt once mention any ſuch points as are now controverted be-

twist them and us. 5. It is clear from unquestionable history, and confession of our adversaries, that a continued succession of orthodox doctors, who did confess and teach the same doctrine, for the substance, that we own, have in no times been wanting to the church, nor some visible party to withstand Popery, and keep up a witness to the truth, even in the greatest darkness; as the Romish writers are forced to confess. That the Protestants now are the same which the Waldenses were of old, and the Berengarians before them.

Quest. "Doth not the Popish religion found on such grounds and principles, as can bring a sufficient certainty therewith of its truth, when it hath the decrees, canons, and infallible decisions of their church, to warrant the same, and of the Pope as supreme head?"

Ans. According to their doctrine and principles, they can have no possible certainty of their religion, nor of that they pretend to found on: when, 1. They are not agreed, nor ever like to be, who that infallible Judge is, or in whom such an infallibility as they claim is seated, whether in a general council, or the Pope alone; so as they are in greatest contradiction to other, about the foundation of their faith; nor is this a controversy amongst a few; but one part of their church, with greatest heat, is opposing the other therein. 2. They can have no assurance if they have any church at all, and whether most of their Popes, bishops and priests, be not without baptism, and still laicks without ordination, when their doctrine and the council of Trent so expressly hold the efficacy of all sacraments (of which they reckon ordination as well as baptism to be one) to depend on the intention of the priest who officiates, of which none possibly can be sure. 3. Such have no rational certainty of what they profess to believe, who are with their own consent shut out from all proper knowledge of the Scripture, and on the testimony of men must resolve their faith. 4. Is it on a matter of fact, or doubtful relation, they ground their faith, and adventure their immortal soul; where scarce a shadow, or school-problem is to bear up the whole fabric of Popery; which is

an alledged presidence of Peter amongst the apostles, while no demonstration can ever be given, that Peter was at Rome, or that he was bishop there, or if the same privileges be entailed to his successors, and how these should be chosen in after-times? 5. According to their principles, they have no Bible, nor any such authentic record, to prove religion; but what is a mass of dead unsensed characters, that hath no articulate voice or intelligible sound, until the Romish clergy put a sense thereon; So that the very letter of the Scripture is most evidently passed from. For myself, I dare say, before him who knoweth all things, that I would tremble or stand in awe of any deceit or mistake in the matter of religion, and have in greatest earnest sought to be persuaded of the truth, without respect to interest, party, or education, as that wherein I know an eternal salvation is concerned; but can see no way to embrace Popery, except men turn Atheists, yea, quit all religion and reason at once.

Quest. "Is not Rome the catholic and apostolic church, out of which there is no salvation?"

Ans. We know there is a catholic church under the gospel, that consists, of all who embrace the Christian faith, whether bond or free, Jews or Gentiles; and is to no particular nation, people, or language, restricted, as under the law: But that the Romish church can have no possible claim here, is unanswerable; 1. Because no institution is in the Scripture of such a church, as consisteth of all Christians subjected to one human head, and supreme governor under Jesus Christ, on the earth; or where subjection to the Pope is made a condition to salvation. 2. It is clear, that in the apostles' time, and for many ages after, the Christian catholic church had a being, when it had no dependance on the see of Rome; nor was known by any such test, as to own the Pope and his supreme jurisdiction; except it be averred, that there was one catholic church before the setting up of Papacy, and the other since, essentially different from the former. 3. There is no access to deny that they are more and of greater extent in the world who embrace the Christian faith,

and have no communion with the see of Rome, or their doctrine, than such who are subjected thereto. 4. As there is *one faith, and one Lord Jesus Christ*: so is there but *one body, which is his church*, united to him as her head, Eph. iv. 3, 4. which is the prerogative of the Son of God alone, and incommunicable to any to be head thereof, *but he who for this end died and rose, that he might be the Lord of the dead and of the living*, Rom. xiv. 9.

Quest. "Yet is not still the same Christian religion, at least for the substance, held forth in the Popish doctrine which the Protestant church owns?"

Ans. Whatever in words such pretend, their principles, and the known doctrine of the council of Trent, can too visibly resolve this, that these do not retain the Christian faith in the essentials thereof, but have razed the very foundation, who resolve not their faith on the Scripture and its divine authority, but on a human testimony; and deny religious worship to be due to the true God alone, but give it unto angels and men also; who lay another foundation to build on than Jesus Christ, another purgatory than his blood to purify us from all sin, another propitiatory sacrifice to expiate sin than his death *who was once offered to bear the sins of many*, Heb. ix. 28, another merit than his obedience, by which we are made righteous; and thus make void the great intent of the gospel, laying down a way of life and salvation on the same terms that it stood in the covenant of works. Certainly we must either quit the Scriptures, or acknowledge that nothing can be more destructive to the Christian faith, revealed there, than such doctrine.

Quest. "Is there no infallible rule and judge, to determine herein, on whose decisive sentence we may securely rest in the greatest controversies?"

Ans. If we own ourselves Christians, this can be no debate, that the Scriptures, contained in the Old and New Testament, are the supreme judge, the oracles of God committed to the church, Rom. iii. 2. to give answers in every dark case; *The type and form of sound doctrine*, Rom. vi. 17. unto

whose sentence we are, in all matters both of faith and practice, expressly referred by the Lord, Isa. viii. 20. *To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

SECTION II.

Quest. "SINCE the rule of faith must be plain and intelligible, can the Scripture be such, which, according to the *Papish doctrine*, is a mass of dead and dark characters, until their church put a sense thereon?"

Ans. Its own witness is clear, 1. That it is *such as maketh the simple wise*, Psal. xix. 7. And a *Light shining in a dark place*, to which we are called to take heed, 2 Pet. i. 19. *A lamp to our feet*, Psal. cxix. 105. 2. We see, what is written there *was for our learning*, Rom. xv. 4. and given us for that end, that it might be understood. 3. It is clear, the promise of *The Spirit to lead us into all truth*, John xvi. 13. doth belong to every believer, as well as to the greatest doctors of the church who can pretend no extraordinary revelation for leading of them. 4. We know the fathers and ancient church did still prove their doctrine from the Scripture, as not only of more authority, but more clear, than their comments. 5. Though some Scriptures be not so plain as others, and several prophecies sealed up, until their taking place in the event; yet nothing can be more plain than the fundamentals of Christianity, and those Scripture-truths necessary to salvation: But the world may see it is not obscurity against which their true quarrel is, but a too clear evidence, before which their interest cannot stand.

Quest. "Yet, is this a sufficient ground for the Scripture's being translated into our own language, so as every man may read, and have access thereto, which the *Romish church* so expressly forbids, as the cause of error and heresy?"

Ans. We know, 1. The command is express for all to read, and teach *their children*, Deut. vi. 11. 2. That under the law, the Jewish church had no restraint; and should the

church now be in a worse case, and live in more darkness?

3. Upon this account were the *Bereans* so highly commended, for examining the apostles' doctrine, by the written word; which they could never have done, if any such restraint to read the same had been upon them. 4. It is a strange cure, to keep from the light for fear of going wrong; and when Christ saith, *You err, not knowing the Scriptures*, Mat. xxii. 22. that ignorance thereof should be the way to keep us right.

Quest. "Is it not evident, 2 Pet. iii. 16. how there are things hard to be understood in *Paul's* epistles, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction?"

Ans. It is there shewed, 1. Some things are more dark in the Scripture, which none do deny. 2. We see, those who thus stumble, are such as wrest the word, and not of a humble, sober and serious spirit, by whom none will judge the apostle here means the whole of believers within the church, except the doctors thereof; nor hath it more weight to forbid Christians the use of the Scriptures, and to read the same, than the necessary use of meat, because some unsober abuse the same to their hurt.

Quest. "What inducement should the *Romish* church have to restrain Christians in this, if it be so visibly cross to the rule?"

Ans. They have (I confess) this plea for necessity; since their case so stands, they must either ruin their interest, and be discovered in the greatest imposture that ever was known in the world, or have the Bible shut up, though to ruin the souls of many millions of the poor people; nor is it strange such hate the light, whose deeds are evil, lest they be reprov'd.

SECTION. III.

Quest. "IS it not to the church, and to no private person, that the supreme authority and power of interpreting the

Scripture, and to be judge of. the true sense thereof, doth belong?"

Ans. The Scripture is the alone infallible rule for interpreting itself; and to none, but to the Holy Ghost speaking to us there, can such authority be ascribed, 1. Because the Scripture is the supreme standard, by which we are called to prove all things, 1 Theff. v. 21. and to know the spirits, whether they be of God or not, 1 John iv. 1. Yea, thus must the doctrine of the church be known. 2. The sense of the Scripture is the Scripture itself, which thence only can be sought and understood by the same Spirit that indited it. 3. We see by innumerable instances, that where in one place it speaks more darkly, it doth explain itself in another, and thus refers us to its own interpretation; yea, how with a greater light and plainness truths are opened up in the New Testament, which more darkly, and as under a vail, were held forth in the Old.

Quest. "But the Scripture is of no private interpretation, therefore to the church only it must belong?"

Ans. This only shews the Scripture's interpretation can be subjected to no human comments, nor have its authority of men, and from their private judgments, whatever place they bear in the church; but must be sought from the Scripture itself, and according to the analogy of faith; but no ground in the least to deny access to private persons, to know and seek after the true sense of the Scripture.

Quest. "What assurance can any have, that such is the true sense of the Scripture, without some authoritative decision of the church?"

Ans. We know, 1. That the promise, *John* vii. 17. stands good to every one of the saints, *If any man do my will, he shall know my doctrine, whether it be of God or not:* and such who obj^t of this, dare not (I am sure) restrict the giving of the Spirit for that end to their church-doctors only. 2. If the sense of any thing written can be understood, then it is sure the most weighty and necessary truths of the Scripture are so obviously plain, as they can bear no other sense and

meaning except men quit the very use of reason and judgment. 3. Where the Scripture is more dark, there want not peculiar helps and means for a Christian's attaining the true sense thereof; such as serious prayer, the knowledge of the original languages, and repairing to these fountains themselves; advertency to the scope and intent of the Scripture; yea, a dexterous comparing of one place with another, with a prudent use of the judgment and commentaries of such as have written thereon, though not implicitly to rest upon them.

Quest. "But hath not the Scripture so various senses, as necessarily requires a living and visible judge, to decide when to take it in a literal or in a figurative sense?"

Ans. It concerns the Romish church to impose divers senses on the Scripture, that it may have none at all: tho' we deny not some figurative expressions, the true sense whereof must be understood from what is the obvious intent, as the scope of such a Scripture, and not the very words themselves; such as Mat. v. 29. *If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out.* Psal. xci. 13. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion, and the dragon:* But it is most clear, 1. That one, true and genuine sense the Scripture only hath, from the words rightly understood, which is the literal sense; and thence only arguments can be taken to prove any truth. 2. That in truths necessary to salvation is nothing figuratively expressed, but what is with greatest plainness, to the discerning of all, held forth. 3. What the Romish church pleads for, of an *Allegoric*, *Moral* and *Typical* sense, they are no different senses of Scripture, but a different application and accomodation of one and the same Scripture divers ways, in the use whereof much caution and sobriety is needful: And though a necessary respect is to be had always to the type, and the thing typified; yet even there is the sense still one and the same.

SECTION IV.

Quest. "HOW know you the Scripture is of God, or can be infallibly sure of its divinity, but by the church and its testimony?"

Ans. We deny not this to be a peculiar motive and inducement for a high and reverend esteem thereof, and a ministerial help to our faith, though with no authoritative dominion over the same. But, 1. The Scripture is known by its own light, and these express characters and marks of divinity it bears, which convincingly shew whose it is, so as the meanest Christian may know this, without any human testimony. 2. There needs also the inward work of the Spirit to beget a firm and thorough persuasion thereof upon the soul.

Quest. "But how do you know, you perceive such a light in the Scriptures, as you speak of? Or can make it appear to others, that you are not deceived therein?"

Ans. None will distrust their own eyes, though by no arguments they can persuade those who are blind, that they really behold so excellent a light as the sun: But it is strange and absurd to demand a reason of sense; or for a blind man, to require him who seeth to prove unto him by argument, that he certainly sees and beholds such things.

Quest. "Is not this to run in a round and circle, from the Scripture to the Spirit and from the Spirit again to the Scripture, when thus you know by the Spirit's revealing the Scripture to be the word of God, and that revelation to be true by the Scripture?"

Ans. No ground is here for any such challenge.

1. Because we admit no private or particular revelation of the Spirit, to assure us of the truth, different from what is revealed in the Scripture itself.

2. It can be no circle when it is so clear, the Scripture and Spirit mutually prove one another by different ways and not in the same manner: For it is by way of argument that

the Scripture proves the certainty of the Spirit holding out such truths, whence we know how to discern the Spirit; but effectively, and as an instrument, doth the Spirit prove the Scripture, by enabling us to see that marvellous light which is therein.

3. As hath been already cleared, there are arguments of another nature, and independent on the testimony of the Spirit, by which the divinity of the Scripture can be solidly known and demonstrated.

Quest. "Can you know the Scripture is canonical, or that these apocryphal books, which *Protestants* reject, are no part thereof, without the church's decision?"

Ans. We know, 1. That these were never acknowledged in the canon of the Scripture, by the *Jewish* church before Christ, to which the oracles of God were committed, nor read and expounded in their synagogues, as their most ancient writers, and of the greatest credit amongst them, witness.

2. They were not written in *Hebrew*, the language of the church, before the coming of Christ, in which all the books of the *Old Testament* were generally written.

3. Though with that severe caution, was the ancient church careful to keep the Scripture, so as the number of the verses and letters thereof was most exactly reckoned, and looked to; yet none of these apocryphal books were ever received or admitted by them.

4. By the primitive church, after the apostles, such were not owned in the canon of the Scripture though by some allowed to be read for instruction of manners.

5. They are convicted of notorious falsehood in many places, both of doctrine and history, which all may see repugnant to truth, and the analogy of faith.

Quest. "But what certainty can be on the credit of a translation, that all know to be fallible?"

Ans. Nothing can be more for moral assurance when it is so clear,

1. That the truth of our translations, though in divers

times and different languages, yet all agree in the main and substance.

2. That solid relief is at hand, to go unto the fountains themselves, the original languages, and see with their own eyes, if the translations thereof be not faithful and true; which by a little pains and diligent use of helps for such an end, is in our power to attain.

3. It is not on naked words, but on the clear and genuine sense thereof, in whatever language held forth, that we found our faith; nor can any deny the Scripture truly rendered in English to be the word of God, though not in the very same characters in which the prophets wrote the same.

4. These evidences of the Scripture's divinity, that it enlighteneth the eyes, and converts the soul, with its authority over the conscience, we know to be no less discernibly and convincingly witnessed in men's vulgar language through all ages, than in the Greek and Hebrew.

SECTION V.

Quest. "IS the Scripture of a sufficient foundation of faith for a private Christian, which, according to the *Romish* doctrine, must have its authority from the church, without which it can be no Scripture, nor canonical?"

Ans. They are indeed concerned to put down all divine record, that they may be alone judges in their own cause; But we know,

1. That the apostolic church had no such claim, 2 Cor. i. 24. *Not that we have dominion over your faith.*

2. That they did bound their authority within the limits of the Scripture, Gal. i. 8. *Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other doctrine than that we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*

3. Thus should the church's witness be of greater credit and weight than the word of God.

4. There is no authority, even the Romish church can pre-

tend to, but what they plead from the Scripture; therefore it cannot be dependent upon the church.

5 Should this be admitted, the Christian cause were lost, in contending against *Atheists* and *Infidels*; nor any possible access to convince these: For what could that argument of the church's authority be to them, who own no such thing?

6. If on this the Scripture be admitted, our faith should then resolve on the testimony of men, and be but a human faith.

Quest. "But must every private man be his own judge, and not the church, to put what sense he pleaseth on the Scripture?"

Ans. It is clear, 1. That there is a private judgment of discretion the meanest Christian hath to know and discern the truth, that his service may be reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. and his faith a rational act: *For every man must prove his own work*, Gal. vi. 4.

2. We deny not a public and ministerial judgment to the church, which in greater and lesser synods may be passed, where pastors and elders are assembled by the ordinance of Christ, though here no blind obedience is imposed; since this only can be according to the law, and in pursuance of it, not above it. But to the Holy Ghost alone can a supremacy, and a sovereignty of judgment, in matters of faith belong; since, *There is but one lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy*, Jam. iv. 12. and *no power against the truth, but for it*, 2 Cor. xiii. 8.

Quest. "Are we not called to hear the church, Mat. xviii. 17. and implicitly rely on its sentence?"

Ans. That command hath respect to church-sentence, and against contumacy; but to impose no implicit obedience, or subject the Scripture authority to men; when it is so clear,

1. That the furthest observance of the apostle was to be such, as might not go without these bounds; *Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ*.

2. This were to divide faith and knowledge from one another, and an express contradicting of that, 1 Pet. iii. 15.

To be ready to give a reason of faith within us, to every one who demands.

3. Thus men might be saved without believing there is a Christ and the gospel.

4. Thus many were under a necessity to live and die infidels, if they must only hear what the Romish church says, and not read the Scripture themselves, who, in some remote parts of the earth, or by a close imprisonment, may be shut up, so as they can have no possible converse with that church.

SECTION VI.

Quest. "IS there no supreme, visible, and infallible judge placed in the church, upon whose decision we may securely rest in all matters of faith and conscience?"

Ans. This article is indeed of great weight to the Romish church, so as their whole interest seems to stand or fall accordingly: But it is clear,

1. They must bring another Bible than the Old and New Testament to prove this, or let us see the least commission and warrant for any such judge there, as they plead for.

2. It is contrary to the command, 1 Theff. v. 21. *Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.*

3. None can deny the apostles were fallible, though not in their doctrine, (being therein immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost) when so ignorant of the death, sufferings, and resurrection of Christ; and it is sure, Peter was far from this infallibility, when he denied his Master; and after he was confirmed, and had that assurance given that his faith should not fail, (which is one great foundation of the pretended Romish infallibility) when *Paul withstood him to the face*, Gal. ii. 11.

4. This power doth the Pope challenge over the Gentiles, as being Peter's successor; when it is clear, that Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, by the appointment of the Holy

Ghost, and Peter's own consent, Rom. xi. 17. Acts xiii. 2. Gal. ii. 9.

5. And do not all know, what decrees of councils have been against councils, and Popes against Popes?

Quest. "Is not Peter that rock, on which Christ promised to build the church, Mat. xvi. 18?"

Ans. It is manifest, that by this was expressly meant the doctrine and profession then made of Christ's being the Son of God; yea, that the same power given to Peter, was, in as express terms, given to the rest of the apostles, Mat. xviii. 18. John xx. 22. And where it is said, *Ye are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles*, Eph. ii. 20. no difference is in the least put betwixt Peter and the rest: Yet here is the great foundation of their church.

Quest. "Does not this prove such an infallibility, that the church is the pillar and ground of truth, 1. Tim. iii. 15?"

Ans. This was not said of the church of Rome, to evince her particular claim thereto beyond other churches; but here clearly is shewed the stability and fixedness of the Christian church, unto which the oracles of God were committed; and no possible reasoning thence for any infallibility to any church on earth.

Quest. "Is there nothing from the Scripture, to shew a difference betwixt *Peter* and the rest of the apostles, as to his precedence, and that the monarchy of the church was established in his person?"

Ans. We find this was expressly prohibited by Jesus Christ to the whole apostles, without exception, that no such absolute authority should be by any of them claimed, Mat. xxiii. 10. *Be ye not called masters; for one is your master even Christ:* But, if any shadow were for this, it might seem more applicable to *Paul*, when he saith, *Besides these, the care of all the churches came upon me*, 2 Cor. xi. 28. If this had been said of Peter, the Romish writers would have made a strange noise; as if they had found one demonstration for all, to secure that interest.

SECTION VII.

Quest. "CAN the Scripture be a sufficient rule of faith, and sufficient to decide controversies in the church, without the help of unwritten traditions?"

Ans. It is, 1. Because the alone way for being saved, is, in following what is written there, John xx. 31. *These things are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing you might have life through his name.* 2. It is a full and sufficient rule, containing all things necessary, both to believe and do, 2 Tim. iii. 15. *From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus: Yea, it is there shewed to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* 3 It is expressly against the Scriptures, to impose any human traditions on the church, for subjecting our faith thereto, Deut. iv. 2. *Thou shalt not add to the words which I command thee.*

Quest. "But doth not the apostle command to hold fast the traditions, whether by word or epistle, delivered to us?" 2 Thess. ii. 15.

Ans. It is there shewed, 1. That the apostolic authority, whether in speaking or writing, was the same; and that to both the church was to give the same credit. 2. That what was taught by the apostle by word, was the very same delivered by epistle: but thence can be no ground for receiving the traditions of the church of *Rome*, which are not only different from the Scripture, but visibly contrary thereto, when neither Scripture, reason, nor antiquity, discover their being delivered by the apostles.

Quest. "Is not oral tradition such as cannot possibly deceive, whereby the Christian faith, and true sense of the Scripture hath been delivered down from hand to hand, and from one age to another?"

Ans. To this of late doth a part of the *Romish* church flee,

though nothing more visibly repugnant to Scripture and reason, if men but open their eyes to see, 1. That no more sure and plain delivery of the truth can be to us, by speaking than by writing; nor can it be possibly judged, how a certainty of the sense of their traditional doctrine should be more than that of the Scripture. 2. This were to resolve our faith, not on the testimony of God in his word, but on what the fathers and fore-fathers have told to the children; and in effect to pass from all certainty of the Christian faith, and to deny that doctrine of Christ, and way of being eternally saved, which, with most convincing evidence, is delivered to us in the Scripture. 3. We see how far *tradition* in a few ages differeth from itself, and hath been the rise of such fabulous romances, the world is full of about matters of fact, from former times; yea, how oft the church hath been almost swallowed up of ignorance and error: so that if one would trace back the divinity of Christ by tradition, they should go near to lose the scent, when it came to *Athanasius'* time, whilst the whole Christian world seemed to be *Arian*.

Quest. "Is there no necessity of tradition, when the Scripture is not sufficient to refute all heresies in the church?"

Ans. Can it be possible to understand heresies, but as they are against the Scripture, or how to have another conception thereof, and yet that not sufficient for their refutation? This is, I confess, a doctrine meet for such, who can make contradictions meet and agree at their pleasure.

SECTION VIII.

Quest. "HAVE we not safe and unanswerable ground, from the antiquity of the *Romish* doctrine, and its long continued succession, to found an infallible assurance of its truth?"

Ans. None can deny these, 1. That the Scripture is the truest antiquity; and what is not according to this, is a novelty brought in on the church. 2. That the rise and pedigree of the man of sin must be traced back to the very times

of the apostles, in his beginning to work, whose gradual breaking-up did then hasten to a more full appearance. 3. But it is most clear also that the primitive church, for some ages, knew no such thing as popery, in so horrid a corrupting of the Christian doctrine, that after followed; nor what an universal bishop, and his infallibility meant.

Quest. "But can any evidence be found, from these first times of the Christian church, that will import a contradicting of the Popish doctrine, as it is now professed?"

Ans. There are no accidents where the thing itself hath no being, nor could these possibly write against *Popery*, in such heads, as the *Romish* infallibility, the worship of images, and fairs, &c. before they were once brought to light; but by undeniable consequence it is clear, they held the Scripture to be the alone rule and foundation of the Christian faith: therefore not the *Romish* church. And that the counsel of God was clearly revealed in the same; therefore not to be shut up as the fountain of error: yea, that there are but two places after death, without the least touch, or mentioning such a thing as purgatory. This also was the known doctrine of the first times, That faith in Christ was the alone way of salvation; therefore not by our own merit.

SECTION IX.

Quest. "Is not the doctrine of merit, for which the *Romish* church so much contends, agreeable to the Scripture, and such as we may securely rest upon; that men by their own righteousness, and the merit of works may be saved?"

Ans. It is clear, we must go to heaven by merit, though not our own; yea, upon the exactest terms of justice, it is due to him who hath paid the price to the utmost value, that none of his purchase be lost; but to us it is only of grace: nor can such works be meritorious, where, 1. We owe all, and do nothing which is not a debt upon us, being *not our own, but bought with a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. 2. Where no equality, proportion, or suitableness can be betwixt the

work and the reward; as is clear, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Rom. iii. 28. 3. Which at the best have some spot and stain cleaving thereto, and come so short to answer what the law requires; Isa. lxvi. 4. *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness as filthy rags.* 4. It is most directly contrary to the Scripture, Rom. xi. 6. *If by grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace.* Rom. iv. 4. *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him who worketh not but believeth in him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;* and chap iii. 28. *Wherefore we conclude, that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

Quest. "Yet, may not some in an unconverted state deserve a conferring of grace upon them, by putting themselves forth to the utmost for their own conversion, which the Romish church calleth the merit of congruity?"

Ans. From the Scripture it is clear, that, before renewing grace, all are the children of wrath, who of themselves cannot frame their thoughts to that which is good, nor have an active concurrence for such a change, 2 Cor. iii. 5. And that the alone cause, which maketh one to differ from another, is that, Rom. ix. 15. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.* Therefore no plea for merit, by any improvement of men's natural abilities.

Quest. "But do not the works of the regenerate, which follow justification, deserve eternal life, not from the imputation of Christ's righteousness, but from their own intrinsic worth, and proportionableness to the reward, which is called the merit of condignity?"

Ans. This were to subvert the whole contrivance of the gospel, which is a judicial transferring our sin, as a debt on Christ the surety; and of his righteousness and merit, to be imputed to us for our justification, without any respect to works: And laying down the very same way of life, which was in the covenant of works; as is clear, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Quest. "Is not heaven held forth as a reward, so as our works do merit by bargain and covenant, Mat. xx. 12?"

Ans. No reward of debt can be found there, as that which is in strict justice due; but to shew it is only of grace, and no proportion betwixt that which is given, and their working: We see these who come in at *the last hour*, had the same measure with them *who had wrought all the day*, Mat. xx. 9. Nor can any merit be in that claim and reckoning; the greatest labourer must still say when he hath done all that he can, *That he is but an unprofitable servant*, Luke xvii. 10.

Quest. “*Is it not promised, Rev. iii 4. That some shall walk with Christ in white, because they are worthy?*”

Ans. There it is clear, the Lord doth account them so, whom he hath accepted in his Son, and for whose sake alone it is, 1 Cor. iv. 7. *For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, which thou hast not received? Then, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?*

Quest. “*Is there no necessity of works here, even in order to salvation?*”

Ans. We know, (1.) This is the way in which God hath commanded us to walk, for our attaining salvation. (2.) Though they be not causes of our justification, yet they are necessarily required in the subject, and person justified, as the inseparable fruits of justifying faith, by which it is made evident to others, Jam. ii. 16. (3.) They are of singular use for a Christian's comfort and assurance. (4.) They bring much honour to God, John xv. 8. But it is sure, nothing can be more clear than the doctrine of the reformed church is, in asserting this.

SECTION X.

Quest. “*IF there be no human satisfaction and merit, what safe adventuring can be on the overmeriting of some for others; and that treasure in the church of Rome's hand, from the works of Supererogation, whereon their absolutions and indulgences depend?*”

Ans. So horrid an imposture may let us see, what it is to be given up unto strong delusion: when it so clear, (1.) That

the wise virgins could spare no oil out of their lamps to others, Mat. xxv, 9. (2.) *That every one must prove his own work, and bear his own burden*, Gal. vi. 6. (3.) If we credit the fullness of Christ's satisfaction, and its infinite value, as the Scripture holds its forth, Heb. x. 14. *Who by one offering hath perfected for ever, those who are sanctified*; and Heb. vii. 25. *That he is able to save to the uttermost*; then no use can be alledged for this supply of human satisfaction. (4.) Let men but exercise reason, and consider how this possibly can be known, that such an overplus of merit is sure, or more than they need themselves; and where any rule can be found, which the Scripture never shewed, how to apply the same, or in whose hand this trust is to be put.

Quest. "Is not the satisfaction of Christ only for the guilt of mortal sins, and to free us from eternal punishment, but not from temporal? therefore we see a filling up of what is behind of the sufferings of Christ for his body, which is the church, Col. i. 24?"

Ans. 1. It is clear, that Jesus Christ made a perfect reconciliation for sin, Dan. ix. 24. John i. 29. and no mite left for us to pay, by him who answered the full price. 2. What the apostle there shews, none can aver, was of Christ's expiatory sufferings; but to shew that, as his sufferings were the price of our redemption, so were they a seal and witness to the truth, John xviii. 37. In which respect the saints also have their share, in all following ages, to fill up the sufferings of Christ, in his body which is the church, as a testimony to the truth, which the great witness himself did seal and confirm with his blood, who before Pontius Pilate gave a good confession.

Quest. "Yet may not this warrant such plenary indulgences and absolutions of the *Romish* church, and a power to apply the merit of others which is so express, John xx. 23. *Whose soever sins ye remit, shall be remitted?*"

Ans. It is a sad commentary, destroying the text which here hath respect to church censures, and is to shew what authority the ministers of Christ are clothed with, and

impowered by their master's commission, to declare sinners bound, or loosed from their sins, according to the validity of that declarative sentence, thus censured, as they follow that rule for the same, in the exercise of church-discipline; but not the least ground is here for such plenary indulgences they pretend, or to absolve and relieve souls out of Purgatory.

SECTION XI.

Quest. "IS there not clear ground for the doctrine of Purgatory, whereon a great stress of many of the *Romish* principles visibly lies, that though there be an acquittance from eternal death for the truly penitent, yet is there a place after this life, where they must for a time be tormented, and suffer these pains of Purgatory, to expiate venial sins, which their prayers and penances here could not do?"

Ans. The Scripture hath revealed no such thing: But thence it is clear, 1. That sin by the blood of Christ only can be expiated, and is his work alone, who *hath purged our sins himself*, Heb. i. 3. 2. That forgiveness from the Lord to those who repent, is with no reserve of venial sins, or a temporal punishment for such to satisfy justice, Ezek. xviii. 22. *All his transgressions which he hath committed, shall not be mentioned.* Heb. viii. 12. *I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.* 3. From the Scripture we can know only a twofold state of men after this life, John iii. 36. and two ways that accordingly lead thereto, Mat. vii. 14. *Strait is the way that leadeth unto life, and the way to destruction broad.* 4. The apostle sheweth that no middle place is betwixt the saints' being unclothed and clothed upon, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. 5. The unconverted thief found no Purgatory by the way, who had no penances, nor church-indulgences to lead him by the same, if the infinite merits of Christ were not sufficient for all: In a word, this doth manifestly charge God with injustice, as exacting double satisfaction for sin, one from Christ, the other from the sinner.

Quest. "But doth not the apostle shew there is a being saved, yet so as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 15.?"

Ans. Nothing can be more plain, if any read that Scripture, than that there is a figurative expression, and the same with ver. 13. *The fire shall try every man's work:* Which none can expound to be Purgatory; but that not without temporal loss, so as to have their works burned, these shall escape.

Quest. "Are not some sins venial, which a temporal punishment may be sufficient to expiate; and therefore such pains do follow sin here, as might evince a Purgatory after this?"

Ans. It is sure, 1. *That the wages of sin is death,* Rom. vi. 23. And no difference there is shewed betwixt venial and mortal. 2. If a full acquittance from the guilt and punishment of sin, be by Jesus Christ, and that he hath paid the whole price, no satisfaction to justice can be of use for temporal punishment. 3. It is clear, the most sharp chastisements of the saints in this life are for healing, and no effect of vindictive justice, nor can give the least ground to plead for human satisfaction, or such a thing as Purgatory after this life.

SECTION XII.

Quest. "BUT is there no Scripture-warrant, for the Romish mass, as a real, external sacrifice propitiatory, for the living and the dead; and that wherein the body of Christ is really offered up?"

Ans. It is clear, 1. That not the least footstep of a sacrifice, or of Christ's offering his body and blood was in the first institution of the eucharist: Nor in these offices given to the church, of *apostles, pastors, teachers, &c.* Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. is there mention of any such, as a sacrifice of Christ's body. 2 No external sacrifice can be now under the New Testament, these under the law being only typical of that which was accomplished in Jesus Christ,

who offered himself but once, Heb. vii. 27. *And by this one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, Heb. x. 18. So as this denieth the perfection of Christ's offering, and his everlasting priesthood. 3. No sacrifice can be propitiatory, which is without blood; since without that, *there is no remission*, Heb. ix. 22. 4. It is clear, in a true sacrifice, the thing sacrificed must be destroyed in the act of sacrificing, which none dare say of the blessed body of Christ; nor can it be conceived, how a repetition of the offering up of Christ should really be, and not of his sufferings also.

Quest. "Can it be denied but some offerings are even under the *New Testament* unto God?"

Ans. We know in the Lord's Supper there are offerings of praise and love, with a solemn commemoration of Christ's death; but no external sacrifice there, or the least shadow of ground from the Scripture for it.

Quest. "Did not *Melchisedek* offer bread and wine, who was the priest of the most high God? Gen. xiv. 18."

Ans. His bringing it forth to Abraham is there shewed, but nothing to shew his offering of it, or what could give ground for the idolatrous service of the mass, though on this they lay its greatest weight.

Quest. "Are there not priests now in times of the gospel, as under the law?"

Ans. We know one only eternal high-priest, who is such as can have no successor; and it is clear, Heb. vii. 26. that the priest, and the offerer, under the *New Testament*, *should be holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners*; Which I judge they dare not own. But what do they mean thereby, since it must either be to repeat over again Christ's sacrifice, which is impossible and blasphemous, or to present what was then done by him, which is a sacrament and no sacrifice? Yea, even in this are they manifestly divided, to give an account wherein the action of sacrificing consists, whether in the words of consecration, *This is my body*; or in putting it on the altar.

Quest. "Yet, may not some be present there with a safe conscience, when no evil is intended?"

Ans. We ought not, from these grounds, 1. The scandal, and offending of our brother, which is not to be judged from our intention, but from what is manifest to others, in our doing such a thing. 2. The hardening of Papists in their way, this being a special symbol of their profession, whereby they are discerned. 3. It were an obvious dissimulation before God, and with the adversary in that professed communicating with them in an external part of worship.

SECTION XIII.

Quest. "IS it not an essential of the Christian religion, that such a precise number of sacraments is, and neither more nor fewer than seven as is the doctrine of the *Romish* church?"

Ans. It is indeed an essential of their religion, but such as could never shew its warrant from the Bible, where two sacraments only can be found of Christ's appointment, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, as having these requisites to a sacrament of the New Testament; (1.) An external visible element. (2.) That it be of express divine institution. (3.) To have a promise of grace and pardon annexed thereto; which is not only signified, but offered and sealed to all who rightly partake thereof. (4.) That it be perpetual unto the world's end.

Quest. "Are these other five sacraments of the *Romish* church but of human invention, viz. Confirmation, Penance, Extreme unction, Orders, and Marriage?"

Ans. Since divine worship must be according to the rule given us by the Lawgiver, it is clear, these have not the least impress of a divine appointment thereon.

Quest. "Is not Confirmation an ancient practice of the church?"

Ans. It was a custom in the primitive times, to bring children baptized, and after they came to some years, before the

church, to put them in mind of their baptism, and the engagements they were under: which they now turn into a sacrament, and therewith use crism, which is oil mixed with balm, putting it on the forehead, in the form of a cross, with these words; "I sign and confirm thee with the crism of salvation;" giving them a blow on the face, with other foolish rites, by which they say, the fulness of the Holy Ghost is given: But, how this is a sacrament, or by what institution ordained, or what promise of grace and pardon is annexed hereto, must be sought elsewhere than from the Bible.

Quest. "But are not Penances a part of repentance, and a visible sign thereof?"

Ans. The public profession of repentance, for public scandalous sins, is a duty; but no such outward sign was ever instituted in the word; as whipping, pilgrimage, &c. Yea, nothing more contrary thereto, than their declared meaning of this to be a satisfaction to justice, and compensation of the wrong done unto God thereby: Nor can they agree among themselves about the sacramentality thereof, if the form be in the act of the priest's absolution, or not.

Quest. "Are not Marriage and Orders unquestionably of divine appointment?"

Ans. None will deny that Marriage, and these offices appointed by Christ in his house, have their warrant in the Scripture, but not as sacraments: Yea, is it not amazing how the *Romish* church should assert this, who maintain the use of these sacraments to be necessary to salvation; when all their church are by their own doctrine excluded from one of them, the whole laity from Orders, and the clergy from Marriage?

Quest. "Is there not yet ground for Extreme unction, James iv. 14. in which, with the oil of olive they anoint divers parts of the bodies of those, who are on death-bed, with such words; I anoint such a place, that, wherein thou hast sinned thou mayest be forgiven?"

Ans. For what the apostle there mentions, 1. The recovery of the sick person is evidently intended; but this Ex-

treme unction is not used, until the recovery of the party be past hope. 2. The health there promised was miraculous, answering to that time, when the faith of miracles was in the church; and temporary, for such as had the extraordinary gift of healing: but for the elders of the church praying over the sick, though not having such a gift now, we deny not its perpetual use.

SECTION XIV.

Quest. "HATH not that article of the *Romish* doctrine, *Transubstantiation*, clear warrant in the Scripture, that Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament is such, as the whole substance of the bread and wine there, in the act of consecration, is turned into the substance of his body and blood?"

Ans. It is manifest, 1. That it could be no more a sacrament, if the sign should be turned into the thing signified. 2. It is expressly to deny the real body of Christ, and that he did visibly and locally leave this world; *Whom the heavens must contain, until the time of the restitution of all things*, Acts iii. 11. It is most directly contrary to the Scripture, where it is so evident, that the bread and wine remain still the same after the consecration, 1 Cor. xi. 26. *So oft as you eat of this bread: And, Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread.* 1 Cor. x. 16. *The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Yea,* Acts ii. 46. where the partaking of the sacrament is called the *breaking of bread*; in all which it is most expressly shewed to be still *bread*. 4. It is clear, that Jesus Christ, as man, cannot be in divers places at once; nor his body at the same time in heaven, and upon earth in the host, *being made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted*, Heb. ii. 17. 5. This is to subject the blessed body of Christ, now in a glorified state to the greatest ignominies; such as to go into the belly, to be eaten by his enemies, to be destroyed by rats and other beasts; the very conceiving of which should cause horror.

Quest. "Are not these the very words of institution, when Jesus Christ took the bread, *This is my body?*"

Ans. They are; but nothing more usual in Scripture than such figurative expressions as this is, to shew the sacramental union betwixt the bread and Christ's body; as 1 Cor. x. 1. *The rock was Christ.* John xv. 1. *I am the true vine*, which I am sure none can take in the literal sense. But I confess, such need not fear to lose their cause, who, from the church's authority, can make void Scripture, sense, and reason at once.

Quest. "Wherein doth this contradict sense or reason?"

Ans. It expressly shews, 1. That we must not credit our own eyes, and that all who were witnesses of the miracles of Christ, could have no certainty thereof by their sight, though these were given to confirm the truth unto men's senses.

2. That the accidents of bread and wine, such as colour, taste, &c. can remain without their subject.

3. That the same numerical body should be in so many places at once, which is in effect, to deny the body of Christ to be human and finite.

Quest. "Yet, is it not agreeable to take away the cup from the people, in the eucharist?"

Ans. If the written word have any weight, it is then sure, how contrary this is.

1. To the institution and command of Jesus Christ, Mat. xxvi. 27. which in these words is express, *Drink ye all of it.*

2. To the command and rule given us by the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 23. *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup*, which hath there a respect to all, who have cause for self-examination.

3. Doth so far frustrate that end of the appointment of the Lord's Supper, for commemorating his death and sufferings; *So oft as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup; ye shew forth the Lord's death till he come again*: Since it is clear they cannot aright celebrate the memory thereof, who partake not of that part of the Sacrament, whereby we commemorate the effusion of Christ's blood.

4. Though in the first administration by Jesus Christ him-

self, the receivers then were apostles; yet is it manifest, he did then enter the whole Christian church in possession of such a privilege, in that very manner he gave it, and not the least shadow for this restriction to be found.

SECTION XV.

Quest. "IS there not safe worshipping God, under a visible representation, and in an image according to the practice of the *Romish* church?"

Ans. It is not their practice only, but professed doctrine and principle, that the images of the Trinity are not for a shew set up, but for religious adoration; Which,

1. Is a most direct violation of the moral law, Deut. v. 8. *Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or the similitude of any thing, to bow down to it.*

2. It is to change the glory of the invisible God, into the likeness of a sinful creature, Rom i. 23. which none can deny to be the grossest idolatry.

3. It is a most express breach of the command, which forbids all serving the true God, after the manner which the heathens used in serving their idols, Deut. xii. 30, 31. *Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared by asking, How these nations did serve their gods? thou shalt not do so to the Lord thy God; which is not, Thou shalt not do so to these idols, but not in that manner to the true God, as they did to their idols.*

4. There can be no possible representing the invisible God, by any outward resemblance: *To whom will ye liken me? Isa. xlv. 5.* And therefore when the law was given, Deut. iv. 12. the people heard a voice but saw no shape, lest thereby they should take occasion to represent him by an external image.

5. How great a sin is it to conceive or imagine in our hearts, that the glorious God is like any thing, how excellent soever: we think it is clear, Acts xvii. 29.

Quest. But can this charge the *Romish* church with idola-

try since they do not fix or terminate their worship on the image, but on what is thus represented?"

Ans. No subtle distinction will acquit before the Lord, and at the bar of his word, what he hath so expressly condemned; When it is clear,

1. That not only worshipping with our mind the image, but all corporal adoration thereof, is forbidden, as idolatrous worship; *Thou shalt not bow down thereto.*

2. None will deny but *Aaron's* calf, and those of *Jeroboam's*, were intended for the true God; yet their worship was most gross idolatry.

3. We find the brazen serpent, though an instituted type under the *Old Testament*, taken down and destroyed when once the people began in an idolatrous way to look after it.

Quest. "Is it not lawful to make an image of Christ, who is truly man, for keeping up the remembrance of him in our worship?"

Ans. We may not;

1. Because it is expressly forbidden to frame unto ourselves, the likeness of any thing in heaven, where the blessed body of Christ now is.

2. Since both natures in him are inseparable, this were to fix a representation in our mind of his manhood only, dividing it from his divinity, and thus give a manifest advantage to Arianism.

3. Nothing from the Scripture giveth the least shew of any shape or lineament of his body to let us see, that under no visible image we should seek to represent him.

4. The true portraiture of Christ crucified we have set before our eyes in the gospel, and administration of the sacraments, as is clear, Gal. iii. 1.

Quest. "Yet, is there no safe ground for the worship of angels, the Virgin Mary, and of the saints; since this is not directed to them, as unto God, but in a lower degree?"

Ans. God alone is, and ought to be the object of religious worship, which in no degree can be given unto any creature

whatsoever, as is exprefs from the command, Mat. x. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

2. All worshipping of angels is forbidden, Col. ii. 18. Rev. x. 10.

3. Since religious worship is due to God alone, we may in no degree give it to the Virgin Mary, or the Saints, since there is *but one Mediator Jesus Christ*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Yea, this were, so far, to put them in the place of God, to provoke his jealousy, Exod. xxiv. 14. *Thou shalt worship no other god; for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God; And of this is he in a special way jealous, that none be copartners with him in his worship.*

Quest. "Is there no warrantable use of images?"

Ans. The use of images is not simply condemned, for we find some in the temple by exprefs command, though they were only typical, to shadow out things to be fulfilled under the New Testament: There is a political use of images also lawful for ornament, and to keep up the remembrance of friends, some historical and for doctrinal use; but none should be set up in churches, or in the least set apart for religious worship.

SECTION XVI.

Quest. "MAY not the worship of God, in the public prayers of the church, be in an unknown tongue, according to the Popish doctrine?"

Ans. You have the apostle's answer to this, 1 Cor. xiv. 2. *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for who understandeth him?* In which he shews, there can be no visible communion in such an act of worship; and lets us see how it contradicts one great end of public worship, that such can have no real and heart consenting therein, which is indispensibly called for in that duty of public prayer; as we see, *ver. 16. For how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen, at thy giving of thanks, since he understandeth not what thou sayest?*

Quest. "Is it not enough to intrust church guides with this, to whom the people make their confession?"

Ans. We know no such implicit reliance taught by the Scripture; but there is no cure, where men will intrust, both religion and reason at once, to the disposal of others.

Quest. "Yet, is there not a necessity of some implicit reliance on these, since, according to the *Romish* doctrine, none can be assured of his own salvation, but what he hath on the assurance of his priest and confessor?"

Ans. Nothing is more clear, than a Christian's access to be assured of his being in the state of grace, and *that he hath passed from death to life*, 1 John iii. 14. upon these grounds,

1. Because a rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, is attainable here; as the apostle sheweth, Rom. v. 2.

2. That by the works and evidences of sanctification, a most firm and infallible assurance is in this life given to the saints, 1 John iii. 18, 19. *Let us not love in tongue, neither in word, but in deed and truth. And hereby do we know that we are in the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.*

3. By the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing with our spirits, *That we are the children of God*, Rom viii. 16.

4. By that earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, *Whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption*, Eph. i. 13, 14. and iv. 30.

Quest. "Is there no ground for that article of the *Romish* doctrine, that under pain of damnation, there be a confession of the most secret sins of men, yea, their very thoughts, so far as they can remember, unto the priest; according to that, James v. 16. *Confess your faults one to another?*"

Ans. We see as much ground from this, to confess to the people, as to the priest; nor doth the Scripture warrant any such thing: But this assurance have we, that *he who confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy*, Prov. xxviii. 13. Which none will deny, is there meant unto God: Nor did the saints in Scripture know auricular confession; *I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*, Psal. xxxii. 5. Though we deny not the duty of public confession, in the case of public and scandalous sins;

but, if men shut not their eyes, nothing but a politic interest is here, to be thus on the most hid and close counsels of men, by such a pretext to keep the conscience under awe.

SECTION XVII.

Quest. "BUT, how should that plea be answered which the Romish church hath to prove their religion, from its unity, universality, and an uninterrupted succession?"

Ans. It is, I confess, strange and astonishing, when so clear, 1. For her unity, that besides what known differences they are at amongst themselves in many doctrines, they are visibly divided about the very foundation of their faith, and infallibility of their church, whether it resolve on the Pope alone, or on the Pope and council, or that late found out rule of *Oral tradition*. 2. For an *universality*, it is easy to know, how much more than the one half, where the Christian faith is embraced through the world, doth not at all own the See of Rome. And, 3. For that succession of their church, and uninterrupted line of Popes, they will not themselves debate, how there have been three Popes at one time; yea, by what horrid means some of them got up to that throne, as their greatest writers are forced to confess.

Quest. "But is the apostasy of that church such, as there is no safe union with it, or hope of being saved in their religion?"

Ans. If Rome be that spiritual Babylon, Rev. xviii. 4. as is there most evident, then is the command peremptory, to come out of her, lest being partakers of her sins, they be partakers of her plagues: Yea, such a threatening we may read, Rev. xiv. 9, 10. as should cause men to tremble, who are not under a strange height of induration; and now, since the breaking up of so great a light, and these clear discoveries of the truth, are the *Waters become bloody*, Rev. xvi. 3.

Quest. Yet can all this make out the charge of Antichristianism, or that the Pope is the Antichrist, who is so expressly foretold, 2 Thess. ii. 3. 4?"

Ans. To resolve such a thing, these are undeniably clear,
 1. That the Holy Ghost in the Scripture hath been, in a more than ordinary way, particular in pointing Antichrist out, by such notorious marks and characters, that after-ages might know him, if they will not shut their eyes; and that a most exact portraiture is there drawn of such an adversary, what should be his form and shape, with the manner of his appearance.

2. Except we deny our senses, it is certain, that we see with our eyes such a one, as is there shewed forth; so as none ever knew the face of a man, by his picture drawn to the life in a frame, better than the church this day may know Antichrist; and that this is he, who so clearly answers all these marks, which in the Scripture are given of him; even he, whose coming shall be after the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath appointed to be used with thanksgiving: who sitteth in the temple of God, and exalteth himself above all that is called God; bewitcheth the kings of the earth with his enchantments, and is drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus Christ: Yea, whose traffick and merchandize, is not only gold and silver, but the souls of men, Rev. xviii. 13. And can we be in the dark, to know or discover who this Antichrist is, whose doctrine is stated in so direct an opposition to Jesus Christ, and the great design of the gospel?

3. Antichrist must be already come and revealed; else, according to the Scripture, that prophecy can never have its accomplishment, since even in the apostles times this *mystery began to work*; and he who *for a time did with-hold* his coming, the heathen empire of Rome, hath been long since taken out of the way. And as the Scripture points his first coming and appearance in the first times of the church; so his last close and final ruin to be near the *second coming of the Lord*.

4. It is thus undeniable, that this adversary can be no single person, or of a short continuance, but is a politic body

and kingdom, centred and united in one supreme head, and with a succession for many ages.

5. It is clear, that these express marks and characters given by the Scripture, for the church's knowing of Antichrist, could answer to no adversary else, which Jesus Christ ever had under the *New Testament*, either *Pagan* or *Mahometan*.

Quest. "Since Antichrist's fall must be by the Word, as is clear, 2 Thess. ii. 4. *Whom the Lord shall consume by the breath of his mouth*; Can it be now applicable to the Romish church, whilst Popery is so spreading, even in those parts where the Word is most powerfully preached?"

Ans. This needs not be strange, if we consider, 1. that Antichrist's fall, according to the Scripture, must be by degrees, as his rise was.

2. That where the truth is not *received in love*, 2 Thess. ii. 18. it cannot long want *judicial* effects, to be given up to strong delusions.

3. It is easy to see, how such as at this day have fallen off to *Popery*, are not upon debate, or by arguments, to their judgment engaged; but it is the visible product of a licentious time, and from an unusual growth of Atheism and ignorance: Yea, those only are found to change their religion, who never in earnest embraced any.

4. Yet can none deny these great and extraordinary effects, the preached Word hath had to recover the church from Antichristian darkness, in these last ages; to which those famous plantations of the gospel, in *Britain*, *Ireland*, *France*, *Germany*, the *Low-Countries*, &c. are to this day a witness; where the greatest Atheists may see an immediate appearance of God, and something above nature, with that convincing increase of light as enforceth such, even to gnaw their tongue with pain, who do not cease to oppose the truth.

SOME SERIOUS
CONSIDERATIONS
FURTHER ABOUT
POPERY,

*And the import of that great Controversy betwixt the Romish and
Reformed Churches at this day,*

THOUGH there seem small grounds of hope to convince such, who, in the holy judgment of God, are given up to that strong delusion of *Popery*, and cease not to oppose themselves to the clearest discoveries of the truth; yet, this being so sad and deplorable a sight, to see how much of the Christian world thus perish, who will not once open their eyes; and is so clear, that under the greatest of judgments this way must involve them, (if the Scripture of God have any weight or credit with such;) yea, since this is so grave and concerning a duty, now in these last times, to bear witness against Antichrist, and pursue without ceasing that call, whatever success it should have, that men would come out of *Babylon*, and hasten from under approaching wrath and judgment; I shall here add, to what is premitted before upon this subject, some serious *considerations* concerning *Popery*, with an appeal to the conscience of the adversary, yea, to their reason and judgment if they will allow its free exercise herein, about the truth thereof.

CONSID. I.

AT what a rate by clear and undeniable consequences, from the Romish doctrine and principles, one can be Popish, conform to their way; and what is necessarily imported in being a Roman-Catholic, as they thus term themselves; which is not more strange and astonishing in itself, than may be clear in these particulars.

1. That it is to deliver up their reason and judgment to the conduct of such, of whom they must see true cause to fear adventuring upon, in the smallest of their outward interests: And where it is so visible, it is money for merit, and that all can be sold at this market upon such a price; yea, where the poor only must be left hopeless, who thus have not to expiate their guilt, and purchase a plenary indulgence; as Petrarch of old was enforced to say, that if Judas could come with the price of his master's blood to the Romish market, he might be welcome to buy an absolution; where no sin needs want a dispensation to allow it, or a pardon for its commitment, if their purse can possibly answer thereto.

2. this is to quit that judgment of discerning given them of God, and be shut out of all proper knowledge of the Scripture with their own consent (except these of the clergy) so as they must not trust their own eyes, but others, in the great interest of their eternal state; and thus take the Romish authority for their Bible: Yea, such whom they cannot but see, what palpable ignorance in some, and deceit and falsehood is in others, of those they thus implicitly credit; and that the concerns of this earth, and their private interest, do for the most of such more sway, than any thing of religion.

3. It is by clearest consequence manifest, that this is a visible betaking of themselves to a covenant of works, and to stand thereby, in the most express opposition to the great intent of the gospel; since, according to their principles, it is merit, yea, their own proper merit, must be the way for their

obtaining of heaven; and all they ascribe to Jesus Christ herein is this, only to give life and salvation to their merits, which yet are in themselves, and from their own intrinsic worth, without the imputation of Christ's merit thereto, thus meritorious, as they term it, *ex condigno*. And thus only do they admit, a restoring again by him of a covenant of works on the same terms with the first; *Do this and live*.

4. It must be at that rate, one can be this day Popish, guilty of the grossest idolatry, and a *turning the glory of the invisible God, into the similitude of a corruptible man*, Rom. i. 23. with a most express counteracting of that great precept of the Moral law, against bowing down and worshipping of any graven image; they being no less thus guilty of an idolatrous worship, than either the church of Israel of old, or the Pagan world could be charged with; since both had a respect further than the image itself, the one to the true God, and the other to their feigned deities.

5. Whatever liberty this way gives to sin, and to lay the stress of their inward peace on the priest's absolution; yet it is clear, that at that rate on these terms can one be Popish this day, to subject themselves to a yoke and bondage from men, that, without a judicial stroke on their conscience, might seem intolerable: such as auricular confession to a priest, of their most secret sins, and this under the pain of damnation; their penances, with that blind and unlimited obedience therein to their church guides, without access to consult the Scripture, as if this way of expiating sin could be a satisfaction before the holy God; such as their whipping of themselves, and going in pilgrimage to some superstitious place; yea thus meritorious because they be grievous to the flesh: but why not rather an offering up of the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul, as those of old unto Molech? which might witness a further degree of doing violence to their own flesh, if men might thus think, by a sacrifice of their devising, to appease the justice of God.

6. This necessarily also must follow an embracement of Popery, and subjecting to that way, to be put beyond a po-

stability of any inward peace here, or quiet as to their future state in another world, since it is undeniable,

(1.) They must have some merit of their own, and an human satisfaction to confide in; and on that foundation of good works lay the weight of obtaining life; whilst yet, according to their own principles, they see there is no possible being sure, if these shall be found equivalent in value to answer this end.

(2.) That no assurance of salvation is so much as attainable, according to their doctrine.

(3.) How sad a cure, as hath no suitableness therewith to ease a disquiet and awakened conscience, do their principles bring? such as penances, their own satisfaction, the Pope's pardon, or absolution of the priest, invocation of saints and images; whence it was, in the darkness of Popery, most found themselves under that enforcement for so many donations, and to stretch their state to the furthest for soul-masses, since they could find no ground for their soul's quiet here.

(4.) And does not this way and doctrine most visibly pursue men, not unto death only, but beyond it, through these tormenting thoughts, and fear of a Purgatory to come, and that uncertainty as to the time or term of release; so as, at the best, death must have a terrible and affrighting look?

7. If men would bring this near their thoughts, no less can serve to be a Popish profelyte, than a manifest involvement in the blood of all the saints which hath been shed, and serving themselves heir to both the guilt and judgment of such horrid and inexpressible cruelty, exercised by the Romish church on those for so many ages past, who through grace, did resist unto death, striving for the truth against Antichristianism: for it is clear how such come on the same score by their virtual consent, and justifying the same, with as real accession before the Lord thereunto, as though they had actually concurred. Oh what a reckoning will this once be found, to enter into eternity with, before the judgment seat of Christ!

8. And is it now possible for any to be Popish, but at that rate of resisting the clearest discoveries of the truth, and an express doing despite to the Spirit of grace, a refusing to be cured, and to come to the light, now when Antichristianism is by such undeniable evidences revealed to the world, as men cannot be in the dark who this great adversary is, that do not shut their eyes from it? Oh what a revenge do hatred and malice at the truth cause, that can turn men cruel against themselves! Nor is that stroke of judicial blindness more strange and amazing this day on the Jews, when surrounded with so clear discoveries of the truth, than this may now be which is upon the Romish church, that cannot see that desperate state they are in, when such undeniable light is held out from the Scriptures thereabout: Nay, it must be said, Who will not see this?

9. I must here further add, how evident also this is to be Popish, and enrolled with such a party; that it is no less than to stand under that most dreadful peremptory threatening, as is in the whole of the Bible denounced against such as in these times of light shall engage with that way, *Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.* "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand; the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name." Oh if men would be so far awakened with the dread of this threatening, as once to come and see but with their own eyes to what party this is applicable, and expressly pointed at by the spirit of God there? And it is sure they could not then be in the dark how deep it draws, under what pretext soever, for any to be Popish. Nor is it strange, that, after such abused light, hell cometh now more hot and more inevitable than before, while so

much of the Christian world (who own that name and profession) do shut their eyes and ears at so clear and distinct a sound from the Scripture, seems to roll over all certainty hereof, to the decision and irrevocable sentence of the great judge.

CONSID. II.

CAN it be in the dark this day, if this be not upon choice; that the great interest of the reformed church, in contending against Popery, is a most express appearance and contending for the truth of Christianity, and doctrine of the Scripture delivered to us in the Old and New Testament? And is so discernible, upon these great heads,

(1.) That there is but one mediator betwixt God and sinners, against such direct opposition thereto in the doctrine of the Romish church, that brings in a plurality of mediators, and the worshipping of angels and saints departed for that end.

(2.) In behalf of the reality of Christ's human nature; which, by the doctrine of Transubstantiation, is subjected to have a new-created being in their consecrated Hostia, at each time, and every where, at the pleasure of a wretched man; which is in effect a most express denying of his blessed body to be human and finite.

(3.) It is clear how expressly concerned the Protestant church is, in opposition to Popery, to contend for the reality of Christ's death and suffering for his elect: and that this time is come and past, no more possible to be repeated again, wherein he *once appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, Heb. ix. 26. *And by one offering hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified*, Heb. x. 14. against that horrid blasphemy of the Mass, which they own as a repeated offering of the blessed body of the Redeemer, by the hands of the priest unto God, as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; which is so evident a subverting the foundations of Christianity, and to

make void the infinite value and efficacy of the death and suffering of Christ once offered, and for ever in behalf of his elect, whilst they thus own a continued offering of his body; which, as the apostle shews, Heb. ix. 25. that if Christ had offered himself often, he behoved to have suffered often.

(4.) And is it not clear, that great interest of truth the reformed church is now pressed to appear upon against Popery, is the doctrine of Christ delivered to us in the Scripture, as that whereon we must found and resolve our faith, and not the authority of men, which they so expressly oppose and deny; so as it is no less than the Christian cause and quarrel, for which all who love the truth are called to contend, and that we should not be bereft of that blessed infallible rule and standard of truth, by those, whose great aim is, to have it deruded of all authority, but what is precarious and dependent on them; not to be so much as intelligible, and to have an articular voice, until they cause it speak, and put what sense thereon they please.

CONSID. III.

IT may be astonishing (and is surely one of the greatest depths of the judgment of God this day) to see what of the world, with their own consent, is subjected to so visible and notour an *imposture* as *Popery* is, whilst such, as it would seem not conceivable, how men can exercise reason, and not as in a deep sleep, and have this hid from their eyes, the obvious deceit and imposture of such a way, where no religion but a compound of human policy, with their own private interest and gain, is wholly intended; about which I shall offer (I hope I may with some confidence say, it is for the truth's sake) a short touch hereat in some undeniable instances.

1. None will debate how this way is framed for such an interest, that there may be a grant and allowance from the Pope for any sin, and to transgress the express law of the great Lawgiver; yea this put to sale. Oh what a strange

device, that for money men may have a liberty to destroy themselves! whilst on the other hand, nothing is followed with more severe threatenings than an absolute subjecting to their arbitrary commands; so that one may safely disobey the holy God, and this with a warrant; but not the Pope and his clergy, under the hazard of condemnation.

2. That such a stock and treasure of merits should be in keeping by the Romish church, and under their trust to dispose of, as a thing deposited into their hand by such who had more than enough for themselves, to serve for the use of others: and thus at their disposal to give out thereof to satisfy divine justice for those who have not sufficient merit of their own; this only being necessarily provided, that these who get a share of such a treasure compensate it by somewhat equivalent, and buy it ere they have it: but herein could they never resolve the world how to be sure, if these merits were truly more than such whose they were needed themselves, or how they came into their hand, or were intrusted by them to apply; or if their strength be not long since spent and exhausted by so long continued application, in such innumerable indulgences given out of that treasury: Oh what a deplorable contrivance is here, which I confess should be owned as one of the greatest master-pieces of cheatry that ever the world knew! if it were only to cheat men of their purse; but this goes further to those great interests of the immortal soul; and yet so many will not see the visible intent of this trade and merchandise, that it is indeed the merchandise of the souls of men, so expressly foretold by the Holy Ghost, Rev. xviii. 13.

3. Their taking on them to change the condition of the dead, and insure to their friends the happy estate of their souls upon some large offerings to the church for this. As likewise that respect and veneration they require from men to the reliques of the saints deceased, whereto they ascribe such power both against sin, and for healing the diseases of the body: yea most of these pretended reliques, such as must necessarily plead some extraordinary miracle to be wrought

for their continued preservation, that thus they may with confidence persuade the world their having some bone or scull of the apostles and primitive faints to be still seen, if any have a heart to give a price for it.

4. That the Romish Pope is the true successor of Peter, and thus Christ's vicar, as they term him, upon the earth; which men must needs take upon trust, with an implicit faith from such whose preferment and gain in the world should be otherwise ruined, if this be not taken off their hand, whilst yet it is so undeniable at what a strait they are to put a handsome shape on this device, or how the world can know upon any sure ground, (1.) How Peter was at Rome, or that he was settled in a peculiar manner bishop in that see, which neither Scripture, nor the most ancient records of the church give the least shadow of ground for. (2.) How the Pope becometh his successor, or upon what warrant, yea, that this should be an article of men's faith, where the Scripture is wholly silent. (3.) How that pretended succession to Peter in that particular diocese of Rome, should have a catholic power and headship over the whole church annexed thereto, so as all who succeed in the one, must also in the other. (4.) How a warrantable succession of each particular Pope, to the apostle, can be made sure, upon this pretended right, and that he hath lawfully succeeded; since, if this be null, and the election be unlawful, they have then with their own consent no promise of assistance, nor obedience in this case due. (5.) When it is so clear that the power of the keys were no less given to the rest of the apostles than to Peter, as is express, Matth. xviii. 18, 19. yea, that Peter claimed no such prebendance amongst the rest of the apostles, as may be seen, Acts xv. Upon what ground can they thus refound so great a claim as this? Oh what an amazing infatuation are those in, who should take this upon trust, the very recital whereof is so obvious a refutation of itself; and that on such a pretended power and supremacy of Peter, the whole weight and superstructure of the Romish Hierarchy must lean: yea, which is of a higher concern,

that on this, by undeniable consequence, must be rolled over a weight, no less than the eternal interest and perishing of many millions of souls, who upon this plenary power, and infallibility of the Pope, thus founded upon such a ground, do adventure with such acquittance and absolution as their security into another world.

5. That notable device of Purgatory may be a convincing witness to the horrid imposture of Popery, than which nothing could have been more subservient to that great design, of a lucrative interest, and to keep the people under a continued awe and terror; yea, what improvement for so many ages they made of this for their own private gain, that it may be seen, the Romish church should lose one of the greatest revenues it hath, if Purgatory were not kept up among them, and is beyond reckoning by themselves what continued income this hath had, *Et quantum haec fabula profuit Romana Ecclesiae*: But oh! such as will thus adventure hereon, may have saddest cause to fear, that this purgatory, on their immediate parting with time, be found a real hell, whence no release, or possibility thereof can be, though all the treasures of the earth could be given for the same; and then shall know this sad verification of this truth, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. which so expressly points at Antichristian Popery; *For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, to believe a lie, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; that they all may be damned, who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

6. What strange account do their legends give of their pretended miracles, as the most effectual way to gain credit to these doctrines, which they see can have no possible founding on the Scripture; such as that we may judge those, who are but in the least knowing amongst them, wonder, how credit could be expected from any thereto, such as they tell us of St. *Francis*, how he was greater than John the Baptist, and better than all the apostles, who in vision received the wounds of Christ, suffered the same griefs, in whom all virtues of the saints, as well under the Old, as under the New

Testament, are put *unitive & conjunctive*, and after, most blasphemously puts him in the same room with our most blessed Lord, by reason of a schedule which they say Leo the friar saw descend from heaven, and fall on the head of *Francis*, whereon was writ, "This man is the grace of God, and example of perfection, &c." This book, wherein these, yea, where more horrid blasphemies are written, called *Liber conformitatum, impressis Bononie, Fol. 3, & 150.* is called by them their golden book, with this express clause underneath, by a general consent of the chapter of that order. We have searched this book, and found nothing worthy of correction. Such an instance also is he whom they call St. *Dominick*, of whom they shew that Christ raised only three from the dead, but St. *Dominick* three in one city, that he had the angels at his service, (but it may be easy to judge what angels they were) how the elements did obey him, and the devils trembled at him; how he had a star in his forehead, when he was baptized, and restored forty strangers to life that were overwhelmed in a ship, and long under the water, with much more of this kind; published to the world by Anthony an archbishop of his order. *Antho. Arch. Pag. 3, 23.* But with these famous instances may be fitly joined two Nuns, no less known and public, who, if they had lived in one time, and their order could have allowed it, might have been suitably matched with other: the one is, *Magdalena de cruce*, Abbess of a monastery of Franciscan Nuns, who by the power of the devil appeared to mariners in a storm at sea, when invoke, and the storm calmed, was sometimes lift up into the air, and the sacrament went up visibly out of the priest's hand that said mass, through the air before all that looked on, unto her, was of such repute, that, not only many ladies in Spain, but the Queen also, when she was near to be brought to bed, sent the mantles wherein the child was to be wrapt, for her to bless: Yet, at length upon clearest discovery, and her own confession, found to be a witch, in express compact with the devil since she was nine years old, so as the Spanish inquisitors could not get shifted some

form of sentence against her, *Anno* 1540. A passage, the truth whereof the Romish church will not offer to disown, the relation being so public and known by their own writers: And indeed, she was well suited to be an Abbess of St. Francis' order. The other instance is that relation set forth by one *Stephen de Lufignan*, dedicated to the French Queen, of the great miracles, in the year 1586, which happened to the *Prioresse de le annonciado* of Lisbon in Portugal, approved by the greatest church-men there, whose names are set down, how usually Christ appeared to her, and talked with her, and had the impress of his five wounds put upon her, with many such strange things, so as severals were incited through the fame of her, to become Nuns; yet at last was, by a marvellous providence from the Lord, discovered, and all to be an imposture, confessing the same herself, with the whole manner of it; so as the evidence thereof did enforce the Archbishop of Lisbon, with the inquisition to make some shew of condemning her, as is printed at Seville 1589. But the discovery came too soon for their interest, after the relation of her miracles had gone abroad. These instances I only here touch, of which so many else are known to the world, that it may be seen, on what signs and lying wonders, this party leans for the support of their doctrine, which may not abide the light of the Scripture. But oh, it may be sad and amazing in this day, when the truth is so clearly shewed forth, how so much the world seems to have lost all sight and impressions thereof; yea, turned at that rate Atheistical, to be thus imposed upon, for subjecting to that way, where the bait cannot be more discernible than the hook, and where men must quit both religion and reason at once, in getting such a stile as this of a Roman-catholic.

CONSID. IV.

WHILST this strange sight we have this day before us, of the Romish state and hierarchy, with that peculiar frame and mould it is cast in, so different from other kingdoms of

the world, of such numerous orders and degrees, resolving in one monarch and head, the man of sin, after whom the world hath so long wondered. Let us but seriously also consider what true account antiquity, on which they so much lean, gives of this way.

1. How clear and notour, even to admiration, is that discovery so many ages past of this adversary; his shape, the way and manner of his appearance, and so expressly foretold by the Holy Ghost, as we now see with our eyes in the event, when upon no principles of reason, or the least of visible appearances, such future emergences could ever been foreseen, or have entered into men's thoughts, that it may be demonstrably evident to all, this only could have been revealed by him, to whom all his works are known from the beginning.

2. As the Scripture shews that early rise this mystery of iniquity had, and its beginning to work with the first dawnings of Christianity, though then more undiscernibly, and under ground: This we may know also, under whose hand this monstrous birth was most ripened, and brought forth to a more public view of the world, to wit, that horrid and vile wretch Phocas, who then usurped the empire, and conspired against his master Mauritius; and as all histories of that time shew, what a plague and judgment from the Lord he was to the world, so as it is related of a holy man, who then lived, after much wrestlings in prayer with God with some serious enquiry, why such a vile wretch had been set up over the empire, got in a strange manner this answer, *Quia non inveni pejorem.* Yet this cruel and brutish man Phocas, as the Popish writers themselves are forced to confess, was he for whom Gregory the great by his legate, doth so congratulate his advancement, as he summons the angels and all the faints in heaven to rejoice therein. After whose death the succeeding Pope Boniface did so far insinuate on this emperor, as to divide him from the Greek Patriarch, and obtained the granting of that charter, upon which their pretended right stands, to be universal head and bishop of

the Christian church: A very obvious suitableness being here, for one bloody usurper as this was, who rose upon the assassination of that good emperor and his children, to make thus way for another; nor could a fitter mean have been found to help the man of sin to his throne than this Phocas, for which see *Baron.* 81. an. 603. Art. 3.

3. It should be remarkable, that concurrence of things was then for the more full discovery of this adversary, and of his being revealed to be that man of sin, shewed by the Holy Ghost, 2 *Thess.* ii. 3. When their own greatest writers are enforced to tell, since this could not possibly be hid, how from the eighth century, and several ages after, such as exercised the Papal power, were, for the most part, so many prodigies of wickedness in their time, that these histories seem to want words to express the horror and abomination of such as were Popes, for which let any but read Platina himself, *lib.* 5. upon *Benedict* the IV. and many other of their lives, where he shews, how they were become such, as, laying aside divine worship, like cruel tyrants, did exercise their malice in the world; but that some of them lived not long, God taking them away as so many monsters of men: But more fully doth Cardinal Benno speak to this: yea, Baronious also in his Annals, Tom. 10. how it was then known their ordinary use of magic, consulting with the devil, and giving themselves over to those horrid villanies, as almost no heathen records give such an account: and, which are Baronious' own words, though one of the greatest friends to the Popish interest; That such was the face of the Romish church, as fees were changed, bishoprics and church-offices given at the pleasure of the vilest strumpets that then bare rule at Rome. Now this is that true antiquity they have to boast of to the world, and of those Popes, whose infallibility in all matters of faith they would persuade men to rely on.

4. How undeniable is it from those times, when the Romish hierarchy once began to ripen to its height, what worst plagues did thus follow and break in on the Christian

world, yea, what an inlet of grossest ignorance was therewith, not only of divine things, but of all human literature, and morality, as from the concurrence of histories then is clear; that with the several steps of the advance of the Popish grandeur and power, the world did gradually turn worse, yea, and in a strange manner became barbarous, rude and savage, so as both Baronius and other of their writers (who they know intended no reflection upon their way, further than necessity enforced them to speak) shew such was the face of those times, as it was a matter of suspicion to know the Greek language; but to have any knowledge of the Hebrew, was no less than heresy; yea calleth them *infelicitissima & luctuosissima Romanae Ecclesiae tempora*, and that these and following ages were such, wherein all things, both human and divine, were in visible confusion.

5. And is it not notour to all, who consult the church records, what a flood, not only in dissoluteness of practice, but Atheism in principles, did remarkably then break forth on the Christian world, with that advance of the Romish interest towards its height; so as those, who were serious in the matters of truth, were almost brought to a questioning of the whole of the gospel, and any sound founding of their faith in the matters of God, whilst religion seemed to be almost lost in fabulous traditions, and human inventions? Thus Frederick the third king of Suily, a religious prince; in such dark times, was staggered about the Christian faith, and made to question if the gospel was not some human device, as is published at length in his conference with *Arnoldus de Villa nova*, a learned man, upon these grounds; 1. That the whole clergy great and small conformed their lives nowise to the Scripture, had no regard to the souls of the people, and discharged sacred offices, for a form only, or else in scorn and mockery, which then was so notour, as it could not be hid. 2. That those of the more severe order of monks, did obviously evidence hypocrisy, impiety, wantonness, rapine, yea incredulity about the gospel itself. 3. That in a doctrine so weighty, and of such consequence, as

the Christian faith, the Romish church seemed so little concerned, were entangled in wordly affairs, and no course set on foot for propogation of the gospel. To satisfy whom Arnoldus shewed how expressly such defection, and these corruptions were foretold under the New Testament, as that conference published by himself shews. And besides, it is known what advantage the visible grossness of Popery gave to Mahometanism, and for many's falling off from the visible profession of Christianity; which caused Averroes the philosopher to cry out, *Cum Chriftiani Deum suum manducent, fit anima mea cum Philosophis*. Yea enforced such, who gave any serious look to the Scripture, to say, that either the Scripture was not the word of God, or such as professed the same, were not Christians. And when thus Atheism may be seen to follow Popery as its native effect, and mutually concur together; Oh! what might be feared from such an obvious conjunction of both in this time, if the truth and faithfulness of God were not his church's security.

CONSID. V.

SHOULD it not seem strange, and such as no reason can truly answer, why in these times kings and great men of the earth have given their power to support the Romish interest, when this so visibly is destructive to the just right, and interest of all magistrates, but that we see it is of God, in giving them so far up in his secret judgment, until the Scripture be fulfilled, as is clear, Rev. xvii. 17. for it is sure, otherwise these things cannot be hid from their eyes.

1. That as the grandeur of the Romish church grew up, how the kings of the earth by giving their power thereto, lost their own, and by their concurrence in this design were no less evidently depressed than the other raised; so as all, who look in on the history of such times, may clearly see the several steps of the Pope's advance, in coming to his height, and of the empire's declining and fall, both in the eastern and western parts, most visibly meet in one and the same his-

tory: Yea thus, how quickly magistracy, and the power thereof was turned to an image and shadow, that it could not further live and act, but as it was enlivened with the Romish breath; yea, how quickly, in a few ages after Phocas, the greatest of the western emperors were forced to bow at the Pope's feet; so as Henry the IV. was put to stand three days in the cold winter bare-footed at the Pope's gates, ere he could be reconciled, upon some pretended quarrel, he had against him; yea, the Popish writers account it their honour to tell the world how Frederick Barbarossa, the first emperor of that name, was made to lay his neck under Pope Alexander's feet, until he trampled thereon, blasphemously making use of that Scripture, Psal. xci. that thus he would *tread upon the lion and the dragon*, before he could obtain his son's liberty then in prison in Venice, and at the Pope's disposing. And here we may have a conspicuous commentary on that Scripture, 2 Thess. ii. 3. that this let, which was to be taken out of the way of the man of sin's being revealed as is there foretold, was not the heathen empire of Rome only, but the Roman empire in its integrity and strength, even after it was Christian.

2. It is undeniable from the Romish doctrine and principles, that power the Pope and rulers of their church own to dethrone kings, and transfer their kingdoms to others, and by their interdiction to loose subjects from any tie or allegiance to their prince, to bind or loose men's consciences, as they find their own interest stand; and by that plenitude of the church's power, to exempt ecclesiastic persons from the laws of magistrates, so as they may not be judged by these, for the most horrid and notorious crimes, which the civil power ought to punish; whilst their church immunities are a city of refuge for retreat.

3. And, as the Romish religion strikes at the very root of piety and godliness, when by the Pope's power, yea, of ordinary priests, it can dispense with the most horrid acts of wickedness, murder, adultery, rapes, incest, sodomy, and hath their rates stated at what price they can purchase a full

absolution for the same; so doth it thus no less visibly strike at the greatest security of government, and that which foundeth the strongest obligations to all civil and moral duties, which is to have the awe and regard of religion kept up in a nation.

4. It is clear also, how the Romish doctrine subverts truth and righteousness amongst men, which is the greatest security of all personal interests, when it avowedly warrants equivocation, both in oaths and words, and in such doubtful terms to swear, as may be directly contrary to the intention of the judge requiring the same; so as an oath in judgment cannot be the end of controversy; yea, by their doctrine expressly teach also, that a man is not bound to repent presently for the most heinous sins, but is only necessary in the last extreme of life.

5. Are not the principles of the Romish religion, such as are visibly destructive even to human society, in so professed owning, under a pretended zeal against heresy, (for such is the doctrine of Christ unto them) those prodigies of cruelty which we should think human nature, though corrupt, could not but tremble at, without being transformed into the very image of the devil? Such as the French and Irish massacres, the Netherland persecution, under the duke of Alva; the Spanish inquisition, and those bloody years under Queen Mary's reign in England, do before all the world witness; yea, it is obvious, how no cruelty, even of the heathens in the first times of the church, can almost be found to parallel with the Popish cruelty, where they can have a door opened for this. Oh! that it should be so little seen and laid to heart at this day, how the common interest and concern of all princes and magistrates, even upon their own civil rights, is to contend against this greatest adversary, that ever Jesus Christ had upon the earth, and, if now it be not believed, saddest experience may yet make this clear, that in those parts, where the truth hath been received and embraced, and by the good hand of the Lord rescued from the yoke and dominion of Antichrist, that it is sure the security of the

church and commonwealth is there necessarily conjoined so, that, if the Protestant interest should wear out, and the truth decline, the land cannot possibly be safe, where once this had been received.

The Romish interest now seems to gain ground, yea a strange and unusual conjunction to promote that way; but it is well, we know a more blessed and infallible security, than outward appearances to rest upon: and with that assurance, as we can be persuaded of an eternal salvation by Jesus Christ. It is sure also,

1. That the victory and decision of this war shall be on the Lamb's side, and those that are with him must overcome, when the living God hath passed his word thereupon, to his church; and though we may set no bounds, as to any particular time, we have solid ground to believe that a more remarkable stroke, above all that hath been hitherto, hasteneth upon the kingdom of Antichrist.

2. That whosoever withdraw, and think it their interest now to keep a distance in any adventuring for the truth, yet light and deliverance shall arise to the church from another air; but this shall not be their escape and outgate, Yea though it seem a strange contradiction to sense and reason, it is to be the matter of our faith, that assuredly now the rise and advance of the reformed church is on foot, and her sharpest conflicts and wrestlings must tend thereto.

3. Though the spirit of intercession and prayer may be too discernibly found under a sad restraint, as to what hath been in former times in the church; yet it is sure, that many prayers and groans once put up by an innumerable company who now are in heaven, in behalf of the church, and for that solemn day of Babylon's fall, yet waits and still cries before the throne; such prayers, wherein they had greatest access and liberty by the help of the spirit, for pouring out their souls thus before the Lord.

4. It is sure we are to believe that instruments shall be yet raised, and called for that end, with a marvellous appearance of God upon them, to execute the judgment writ-

ten against this adversary; and O what a blessed, and honourable service shall it be!

5. Should this not otherwise be made out, but through a sea of blood, and wounding the heads over many countries, yea in a way (as we have clearest ground to judge) which human reason could never reach. It is sure, this cannot be wanting, and when the God of truth hath said, such an enemy shall be brought down, his counsel must stand, though all the kingdoms of the earth stood in the way thereof; Oh! at what a rate do these now run themselves in the way of his wrath and vengeance, and to be partakers of the same plagues with Antichrist, who yet will not cease, from giving their power to support that accursed and falling interest.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

Page 8. Line 6. for Church read Christ.

- | | |
|------|---|
| 18. | 32. for these read there. |
| 67. | 34. for 16 read 17. |
| 107. | 18. for yes read eyes. |
| 111. | 21. after this add is. |
| 242. | 12. for walking read awake. |
| 259. | 20. for conversation read conservation. |
| 298. | 18. for this read thus. |
| 365. | 22. for wife read wife. |
| 413. | 10. for except read accept. |

VOL. II.

Page 27. Line 17. for must read most.

- | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| 67. | 31. after which add on. |
| 91. | 34. for is read as. |
| 295. | 21. for away read way. |
| 322. | 1. for precedent read precedence. |
| 330. | 29. for abduration read abjuration. |

(Excuse smaller errors.)

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